

MONITORING OF GRIFFON VULTURE *Gyps fulvus* POPULATION OF KVARNER AREA IN 2017

*Monitoring populacije bjeloglavog supa *Gyps fulvus* na području
Kvarnera 2017. godine*

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The Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* is the only remaining vulture, among the four European species, still breeding in Croatia. Its range and numbers have declined drastically at the beginning of the 20th century (BWPi 2006), and the recent breeding population is restricted to four islands of the Kvarner area in northern Adriatic (Cres, Krk, Plavnik, and Prvić). Apart from these major colonies, few occasional nests have been found on the island of Pag and the cliffs of the Velebit Mountain. Its breeding population is currently classified as endangered (EN), and estimated at 100-110 breeding pairs (TUTIŠ *et al.* 2013), although some reports indicate the breeding population to be 141 pairs strong (SUŠIĆ & RADEK 2013).

Croatian population of the Griffon Vultures is unique in its breeding habits, as they nest on cliffs directly over the sea, which makes monitoring quite demanding, as it requires a boat and steady weather conditions.

During the breeding season of 2017 field research was conducted in order to assess the number of active breeding pairs in five different colonies in four islands of the Kvarner area (Cres, Krk, Plavnik and Prvić), as well as to assess the number of chicks hatched. First field surveys were conducted from 31st of March to 1st of April during the incubation period (XIROUCHAKIS 2010). During the survey, the cliffs on the four islands were monitored by boat, and the presence of incubating individuals/pairs of the Griffon Vultures was recorded. All the recorded cliffs with nests were georeferenced and photographed. Photographs were later analysed, and nests on them marked in order to be repeatedly monitored. Second surveys were conducted from 5th to 13th June during the chick-rearing period. All the active nests from the first survey were monitored, and the successfully hatched chicks (many of them already fledged) were counted. Data from surveys were then compared for each of the five major colonies (Table 1). A total of 108 breeding pairs were recorded in the area covered by this research, out of which 76 chicks have successfully hatched by 13th June. It is important to note that this survey included neither the inland of Cres nor any other possible nesting loca-

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tions in Croatia, nor was it carried out in the egg-laying period; it may thus be safely assumed that the total national breeding population exceeds the 108 pairs recorded here.

Table 1. Monitoring of the Griffon Vultures in ornithological reserves and on the island of Plavnik in 2017.

Tablica 1. Rezultati monitoringa bjeloglavih supova u ornitološkim rezervatima i na otoku Plavniku

Islands	Active nests March 31.-April 1.	Chicks hatched June 5.-13.	Success rate	%
Cres: Fojiška-Pod Predošćica	19	18	0.9474	94.74
Cres: Mali Bok-Koromačna	40	25	0.6250	62.50
Krk	19	14	0.7368	73.68
Prvić	18	12	0.6667	66.67
Plavnik	12	7	0.5833	58.33
Total	108	76	0.7037	70.37

References

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SAŽETAK

Bjeloglavi sup je ugrožena i zaštićena vrsta na nacionalnom nivou te jedina, od četiri vrste europskih lešinara koje i dalje gnijezde u Hrvatskoj. Većina gnijezdeće populacije Hrvatske ograničena je na Kvarnerske otoke. U svrhu monitoringa aktivnih gnijezdećih parova na kolonijama na Cresu, Krku, Prviću i Plavniku provedeno je istraživanje metodom apsolutnog cenzusa tokom ožujka, travnja i lipnja 2017. godine. Ukupno je zabilježeno 108 aktivnih parova u prvom obilasku od kojih je 76 provelo uspješnu inkubaciju što je potvrđeno drugim obilaskom.