

PRELIMINARY SURVEY AND CLIMATE-LINKED DISTRIBUTION INSIGHTS OF THE EGYPTIAN VULTURE (*NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS*) IN THE HIGHLANDS OF TAMANRASSET, SOUTHERN ALGERIA"

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The Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is a globally endangered scavenger species, yet remains poorly documented in southern Algeria, particularly within the Saharan highlands of Tamanrasset. To assess its local population and habitat preferences, a year-long monitoring survey was conducted from December 2022 to December 2023 across four sampling sites, with bi-monthly field visits. A total of 153 individuals were recorded, indicating a relatively significant local population. However, densities varied significantly between sites, reflecting differences in ecological characteristics and anthropogenic pressures. The species showed a marked preference for areas surrounding slaughterhouses, where carcass waste provides a reliable food source, particularly due to the high volume of livestock slaughter. Additional sightings were made in remote rocky habitats and high mountain cliffs, where densities were comparatively higher. Key threats identified include the decline in natural food resources, increasing human disturbance, poaching, and the use of toxic pesticides that contaminate carrion. These findings underscore the need for continued ecological monitoring and the implementation of conservation strategies focused on safeguarding natural habitats and managing anthropogenic food sources. The study also highlights the potential influence of climate change on the species' distribution and feeding behavior, warranting further investigation in arid mountain ecosystems.