

EVOLUTION OF NESTING GROUNDS 1998/2019

MONTHS THAT ARE SUSCEPTIBLE OF DISTURBANCES THROUGH HUMAN INTERVENTION



NEST PREPARATION AND HEAT PERIOD EGG LAYING HATCHLING DEVELOPMENT



It's one of the few Canarian scavenger birds and one of the most opportunistic vultures that exist. They have a widely varied diet and eat all sorts of things, especially dead animal carrion (goats, rabbits, pigeons) but also insects, human waste and excrement. That is why their role in "keeping the countryside clean" through disease propagation and water contamination control has always been acknowledged by the Canarian population.

The guirre population is sedentary, as opposed to the Egyptian vultures living in Europe who, after the breeding period, migrates thousands of kilometres to reach the African Savannah, where they spend the winter. Egyptian vultures use the electric cables and their support as nocturnal aggregation areas, or communal "lodging", where you can find large concentrations of them, especially during the winter.

The guirre is a notable bird and has a great cultural significance. It was considered to be a sacred bird by the native Canarian aboriginals and also a good luck bird by European settlers. Many legends and popular sayings related to the guirre have been transmitted across generations through oral tradition. The most well known one is related to the myth of the Phoenix, that says that when the bird is about to die, it flies towards the sky and vanishes into thin air.



4 YEAR OLD SPECIMEN

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FINANCED WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S LIFE PROGRAM.



e-distribuzione



e-distribución



Federparchi

FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA PARCO E RESERVE NATURALI

EUROPARC

PROTEZIONE ITALIANA



REGIONE BASILICATA



REGIONE PUGLIA

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



Cabildo de Lanzarote



Cabildo de Fuerteventura

www.lifegyptianvulture.it/es

LIFE PROJECT EGYPTIAN VULTURE THE GUIRRE

LIFE16/NAT/IT/000659

MESURES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE EGYPTIAN VULTURE IN ITALIA AND THE CANARY ISLANDS

LIFE
Egyptian vulture



ADULT

THE GUIRRE

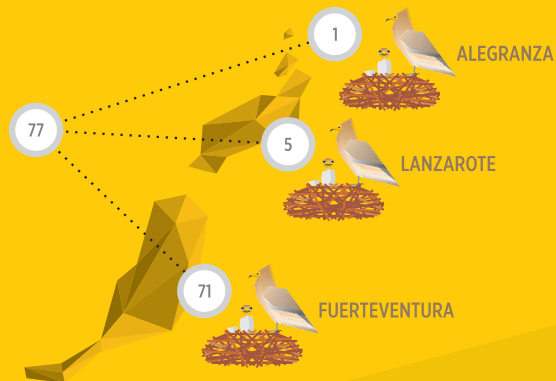
GUIRRE BIOLOGY

VARIATIONS IN PLUMAGE AT DIFFERENT AGES

The Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is a small scavenger bird that can be found throughout Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. In the Canary Islands we can find a subspecies that is exclusive to the archipelago: The guirre (*Neophron percnopterus majorensis*).

Up until halfway through the 20th century, it was a common bird both in the Canary Islands and Italy. After the 50s, the population was reduced significantly which led to its disappearance in all the islands except for Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. In 1998 the population was of a mere 150 individuals and 21 nesting grounds. Currently there are at least 361 individuals and the number of nesting grounds keeps rising, with 77 occupied nests in 2019.

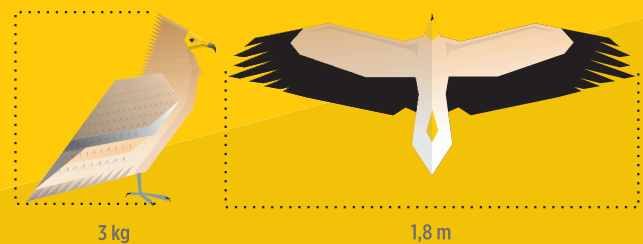
OCCUPIED NESTS



The guirre has the Canary Islands' largest wingspan and has its own qualities that separate it from the rest of Egyptian vultures living in Europe. They are larger in size and present genetic differences that clearly separate them from the others.

Young specimens have an almost black plumage with lighter tips and in some areas of Fuerteventura they are known as "brown guirres". The plumage gets lighter over time, and its face, which is originally a blueish grey slowly turns yellow as the bird ages. They reach sexual maturity at around 5 years old, when the plumage has turned white, the face has turned yellow, and the tips of the wings and beak have turned black, and they can live up to 30 years of age.

Adult guirres enjoy **mud baths**, which is why it is common for the plumage to acquire **brownish tone**. This behaviour is very particular, and it is thought to be related to some sort of social cue.



Guirre couples begin nesting during February and March, normally in small caves, cliff crevices and ravines. They lay their eggs during March and April and it varies between 1 and 2 eggs, with 2 eggs being more common amount. Incubation takes place for 42 days and both the male and the female participate. The hatchlings finish developing after 75 days, before they start taking off for their first flights in the nest's neighbouring area. After a short learning period, the young guirres become completely independent by autumn.

DISTURBING HUMAN ACTIVITIES



Although the guirre population has been recovered in the Canary Islands over the last decade, it is still considered an "endangered species" due to the persistence of risk factors.

