



MILVUS GROUP

2023 | ANNUAL  
REPORT

## **OUR VISION**

We envision a world where people live in balance with nature, see it as a fundamental value and acts accordingly.

## **OUR MISSION**

We are committed to protecting our natural heritage. We carry out applied research and conservation work for endangered species, raise awareness and educate people, monitor compliance with nature conservation regulations and engage in influencing environmental policies.

## **OUR VALUES**

### **Expertise:**

our staff includes biologists and ecologists with longstanding experience in nature conservation.

### **Credibility:**

in making decisions, we rely on best practice models and our field experience.

### **Perseverance:**

we have been committed to our mission since we founded our organization in 1991.



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## MEANING OF SYMBOLS



project funded  
program



own funds, programs  
supported with  
donations



made  
by employees



made  
by volunteers

## PREFACE



2023 has been a difficult year for European citizens - the effects of climate change have been felt more than ever, temperature records have been broken, the second year of war in Ukraine has overtaken many other priorities, and populism and extremism have been on the rise in many European countries, including Romania.

For nature conservation, the most important event and the most important battle in 2023 was clearly the adoption of the Restore Nature Law. Until now, the campaigns of the major parties in the European Parliament have not been characterised by 'fake news' disinformation, but now it has become clear how information can be distorted and how false information about what lies ahead in 2024 can be spread to confuse European voters. Fortunately, despite all the misinformation, this new law, which is vital for nature conservation, has been retained and hopefully the final version will be voted

on in 2024. As you will read in this report, the Milvus Group played a significant role in the fight for the Nature Protection Act and we are very proud to have contributed to its survival and very hopeful that it will have a positive impact for future generations.

It has been a difficult year for civil society organisations in Romania - in addition to the lack of financial resources, there have been concrete attacks on them and, unprecedentedly, we have witnessed the intention to liquidate some of them - a sign of weakening democracy. These difficulties have not discouraged us, but rather strengthened our decision to continue fighting for nature conservation in the future.

In 2023 we completed the strategy of the association (until 2030), an important milestone in the life of the Milvus Group, which we hope will help us continue to pursue our original goals.

**Papp Tamás,**  
President

Iceland   
Liechtenstein   
Norway  Active  
citizens fund

# STRATEGIE



**GRUPUL MILVUS**

ASOCIAȚIA PENTRU PROTECȚIA PĂSĂRILOR ȘI A NATURII

2023  
-  
2030



# 2023 OUR WORK IN NUMBERS

If you want to join our community, become a Milvus member!  
**Scan here!**



▶ **129** active members    ▶ **69** individual members    ▶ **38** family members    ▶ **17** students

▶ **31** employees    Our colleagues spent ▶ **388** days in the field

We worked in ▶ **515** communities in ▶ **32** counties of Romania    We added ▶ **188 970** records to our databases

▶ **15 048** people downloaded the free bird identification app    ▶ **3 038** students    ▶ **151** adults involved in environmental education activities

We cared for ▶ **150** injured animals and provided telephone advice in ▶ **3 000** emergencies    ▶ **22 848** birds ringed

# CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ON ENDANGERED SPECIES



In recent decades, the habitats of many species have changed dramatically. As a result, their traditional ranges have been drastically reduced. Unfortunately, comprehensive conservation plans cannot be drawn up for every threatened species, and experts have to set priorities. Globally threatened or strictly protected species are targeted for conservation action in most countries, including our own.

In many cases, their protection can only be achieved through habitat conservation. This means that in addition to the target species, other animal and plant species living

in these areas can also be protected. That's why we call them 'umbrella species'.

For endangered species that require urgent conservation action, the development of species action plans and the implementation of specific conservation measures are essential.

This year we continued to participate in a number of international species conservation programmes and sought to ensure the continuity of similar projects and activities started in previous years.



## RED-FOOTED FALCON



It is a long-distance migratory bird of prey that nests in colonies in our country, usually occupying the abandoned nests of corvid species. At EU level, Romania is home for the largest nesting population, and in autumn, the most significant part of the global population migrates over our country. Therefore, Romania has a great responsibility for the long-term conservation of the species.

-  together with our colleagues from Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia, we continued to monitor the autumn breeding sites of the Red-footed falcon in Banat and Crişana. Between August and October, we counted **almost 6,000 individuals during 7 field days**;
-  artificial wooden nestboxes installed in previous years have been damaged by weather conditions and are becoming increasingly difficult to replace and maintain. In 2023, we began testing a sustainable, long-term solution, a prototype artificial metal nestbox. At the same time, we haven't forgotten the 60 nestboxes previously installed in a colony in Bihor County, which we have repaired, renovated and/or replaced;
-  our volunteers play a vital role in helping us to protect the Red-footed falcon, and we'd like to thank them again!






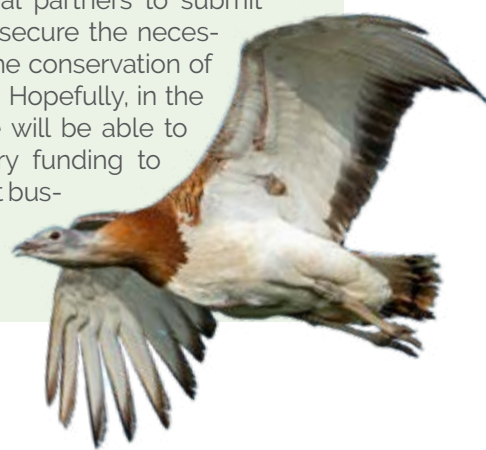
*Ringling is one of the oldest methods of individually marking birds.*

## GREAT BUSTARD



Europe's largest flying bird was on the verge of extinction in Romania's fauna during the last century. Today, the only viable population in the country - 40-50 birds is found in the border area between the commune of Salonta and the neighbouring town of Mezőgyán (Hungary). The fact that the population is so small makes it even more vulnerable, and its long-term conservation requires more concrete protection measures.

-  international coordination of the conservation of the Central European Great bustard population is also facilitated by the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard, which is part of the Bonn Convention. In 2023, the fifth meeting of the Parties of the Convention took place in Bratislava. During the meeting we presented the [situation of the Great Bustard in Romania](#);
-  we took part in the traditional Central European Great Bustard census. This time the census was not carried out in winter, but in the spring during the mating rituals, and seven individuals were observed at the outskirts of Salonta. At the end of 2023, a record number of Great bustard were again observed in Salonta, with the number of wintering birds reaching 67;
-  for an endangered species with populations in the border area, a wide range of conservation measures are needed to ensure the long-term survival of the population. Adequate funding for such costly programmes is currently unthinkable without specific projects with significant resources. In 2023, for the first time, we had the opportunity to work with a number of international partners to submit a LIFE project to secure the necessary funding for the conservation of the Great bustard. Hopefully, in the coming years, we will be able to find the necessary funding to continue our Great bustard conservation programme in Romania!









*Saker falcon in a Milvus Group's nest box*

## SAKER FALCON



The Saker falcon can be found in open steppe habitats. In Romania, the species nests only in the western plains and in Dobrogea. One of its favourite prey is the European ground squirrel, a protected grassland species. Thanks to international conservation projects, the Saker falcon returned to the Western Plain in the early 2010s, and thanks to artificial nests installed a decade ago, the population has since increased dramatically.




-  32 of the 43 territorial pairs have successfully nested;
-  at least 96 chicks have hatched;
-  reproductive success was slightly lower than the previous year;
-  data on the population dynamics and diet of the species were presented at an international conference.

## EUROPEAN ROLLER



In recent decades, European roller populations, once widespread to the north and west of the Pannonian region (except in the Mediterranean area), have declined dramatically or even disappeared. It is a species characteristic of grassland habitats and open wooded areas. Conservation of these populations in the Carpathian Basin is therefore crucial for the survival of the species in Europe, and a good knowledge of habitat requirements and threats is essential.



-  we checked the survival rate of the poplar seedlings planted under the [LIFE project](#) and after the end of the project. We also carried out maintenance work;
-  in 2023, we were able to monitor all the artificial nestboxes in the project during the breeding season;
-  only half of the more than 800 nests have survived the weather and vandalism. Due to the disappearance of the boxes, 155 artificial nests have been used for nesting by the European roller.



*Thanks to the artificial nestboxes installed by Milvus Group, the population of the European roller is continuously growing in the Carpathian Basin*








*Bird laying on eggs, in a nest built on a cliff*

## GOLDEN EAGLE



The Golden Eagle is the largest bird of prey in the Carpathian Mountains. The aim of the programme is to research the species and monitor nesting success in Romania. The programme is run in partnership with the Albamont Ecology and Mountain Tourism Club.

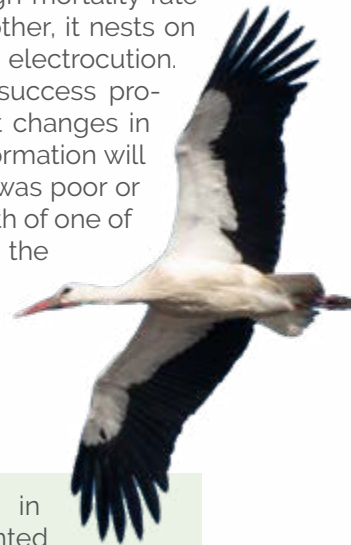





-  we surveyed 23 territories during more than 20 field trips. The breeding success of a few pairs in the Apuseni Mountains and the Eastern Carpathians remains unclear;
-  in case of 7 pairs the adult was present in the nest during the nesting period and in 7 other cases the birds did not nest;
-  in the case of nesting eagles on trees, the presence of the species in the area was confirmed, but we have no data on nesting success in any of the cases.

## WHITE STORK



The White stork is a pleasant and familiar neighbour in the countryside, loved not only by ornithologists but also by nature enthusiasts. It is important to protect this species because, on the one hand, it is a migratory species with a high mortality rate in its first year of life and, on the other, it nests on electricity pylons and is at risk of electrocution. For this reason, tracking nesting success provides important information about changes in the size of the population. This information will indicate whether the nesting year was poor or whether other factors (e.g. the death of one of the pairs) have led to a decline in the population and action needs to be taken.



-  79 nests were monitored in Transylvania, where we counted a total of 215 chicks in 10 localities;
-  131 chicks were ringed in 6 localities in 3 counties (Cluj, Mures, Harghita);
-  29 storks ringed with coloured rings in previous years were observed and identified. Of these, 7 individuals were ringed by members of the Milvus Group.

*We ring white stork chicks, while they are still in the nest*



## BROWN BEAR





There are a lot of myths and misinformation circulating in society about bears, decreasing the social acceptance of the species and rendering its conservation difficult. There is little credible




*Orphaned bear cubs on the way to the Bear Cubs Rehabilitation Centre*


scientific information about bears in Romania, which raises questions about the effectiveness and results of conservation or management activities. At the same time, however, the species is facing real threats, such as the development of linear transport infrastructure (i.e., highways), which is degrading and fragmenting the extensive habitats bears need.


 we have produced the final, 10th episode of the mini-series "Bear Facts", a series through which we provided real information about the species. The whole series (with each episode produced in both Hungarian & Romanian languages and with English subtitles) is available online on the Milvus Group Youtube channel;

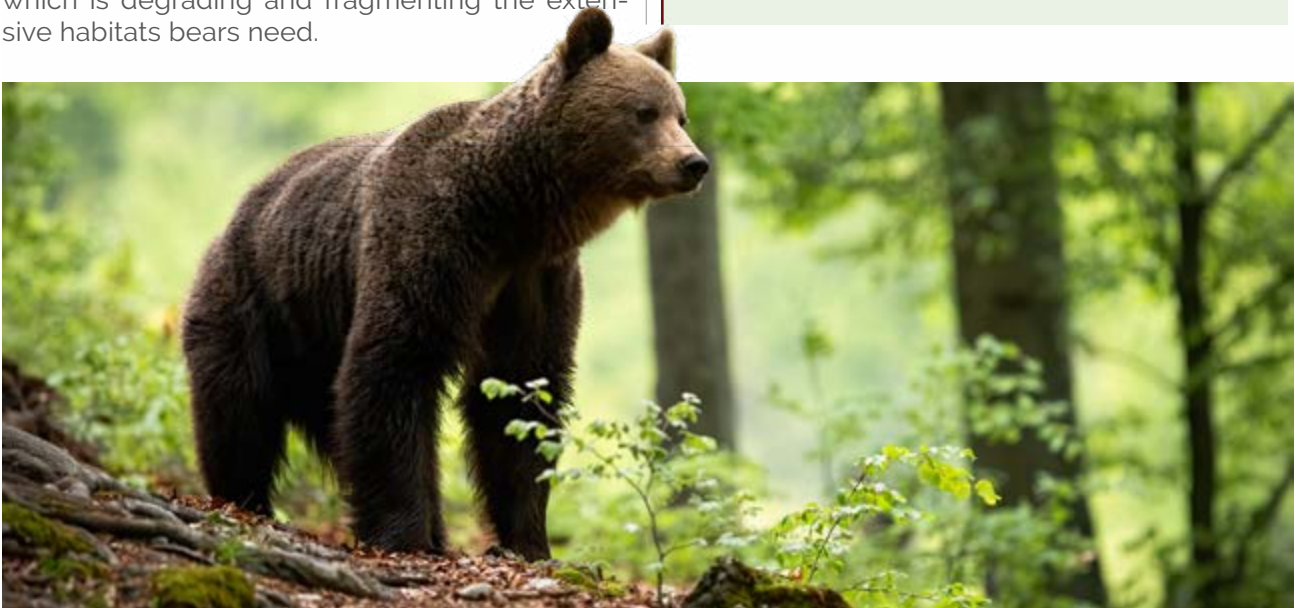
 we have donated and installed 2 electric fences to prevent damages caused by bears

 we have rescued 2 bears from poachers' snares;

 we have rescued one orphaned bear cub and handed it over to the Bear Again Rehabilitation Center for Orphan Bears;

 we have assisted in a total of 7 relocations of habituated bears from urban areas;

 based on our data from bears monitored with GPS collars, the Environmental Permit issued for the Miercurea Nirajului - Leghin section (Section 2) of the future A8 highway (Tirgu Mures-Iasi-Ungheni) foresees the construction of a total of five green bridges (overpasses) for bears, each 100 m wide. Two of the structures will be on the actual highway infrastructure, while three additional green bridges will be built in known vehicle-wildlife collision hotspots on national roads, located in the vicinity of the future A8 highway. Additional measures include: bear proof fencing along the highway throughout the bears' habitat, bear proof waste bins in all highway parking lots, limitations for construction works for highway sections in or near bear denning areas and a total of 110 km of noise barriers.






## EUROPEAN LYNX




Next to the Brown bear and the Wolf, the European lynx is the third large carnivore species in Romania. Unlike the other two species, the European lynx is not the subject of public debate, since it does not cause damages to farmers and its hunt is not really profitable. The low interest in this species has made it the least known large carnivore in Romania. There is virtually no information on the basic needs of the species or on the factors that threaten the Romanian population.



Individuals can be identified by their characteristic patterns


 using trail cameras, in 2023 we continued to collect data on the habitat preferences of lynx in a mountainous wildlife management unit. Since September, we have deployed trail cameras to a total of 40 locations. The cameras have recorded all animals passing in front of them for a duration of 42 days. A total of 4 140 photos were recorded during the survey. Of these, a total of 10 photos - recorded in 6 different locations - were of lynx;


 in 2023 we continued collecting video footage for a short film about the European lynx. The 37 trail cameras mounted for this purpose recorded a total of 25 lynx videos. Of course, in addition to lynxes, the cameras also filmed other species: wolf, bear, deer, roe deer, wild boar, wild cat, fox, badger, european pine marten, polecat, hedgehog, rabbit and red squirrel.

## AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES



The overall aim of our activities is to ensure the long-term survival of amphibian and reptile species in Romania. Over the years, we have proposed dozens of protected natural areas for inclusion in the Natura 2000 network, we have participated in inventories of protected species and in the development of management plans involving these groups, we have initiated the first national citizen science database collecting distribution and abundance data exclusively for amphibians and reptiles (OpenHerpMaps). We are currently working on the first online atlas and photographic checklist of amphibian and reptile species in Romania. We have participated in numerous environmental education activities and are initiators and administrators of several social media groups and pages (Herping Romania, Trachemys Adoption, OpenHerpMaps).

 we contributed to a new article on the thermoregulation of vipers (see list of articles). This research even took us to Georgia in 2022;

 as in the previous year, we continued our activities at the rehabilitation centre, capturing and releasing individuals of several native turtle species. Our exotic turtle project (Trachemys Adoption) continued to raise awareness of the problem of released turtles;

 we have been involved in the assessment and management planning of amphibian and reptile fauna in several new protected areas.

Vipera dinniki, one of the species studied in Georgia.



We have broken all previous records  
of our Chituc Ringing Camp!

**22 848**  
**birds ringed!**

## BIRD RINGING ACTIVITIES AND RINGING CAMP ON CHITUC SPIT

This year we celebrated our tenth consecutive autumn of ringing on Chituc Spit. 2023 was marked by a strong influx of Blue tits, thanks to which we broke all previous ringing camp records:

- the new record for the most birds ringed in a single day is 1 106, beating the previous record of 876 birds;
- we ringed 4 376 birds on a single week, the previous record was 4 231 birds per week;
- the new record for most birds ringed in one season is 22 848, 15% higher than the previous record from 2019.

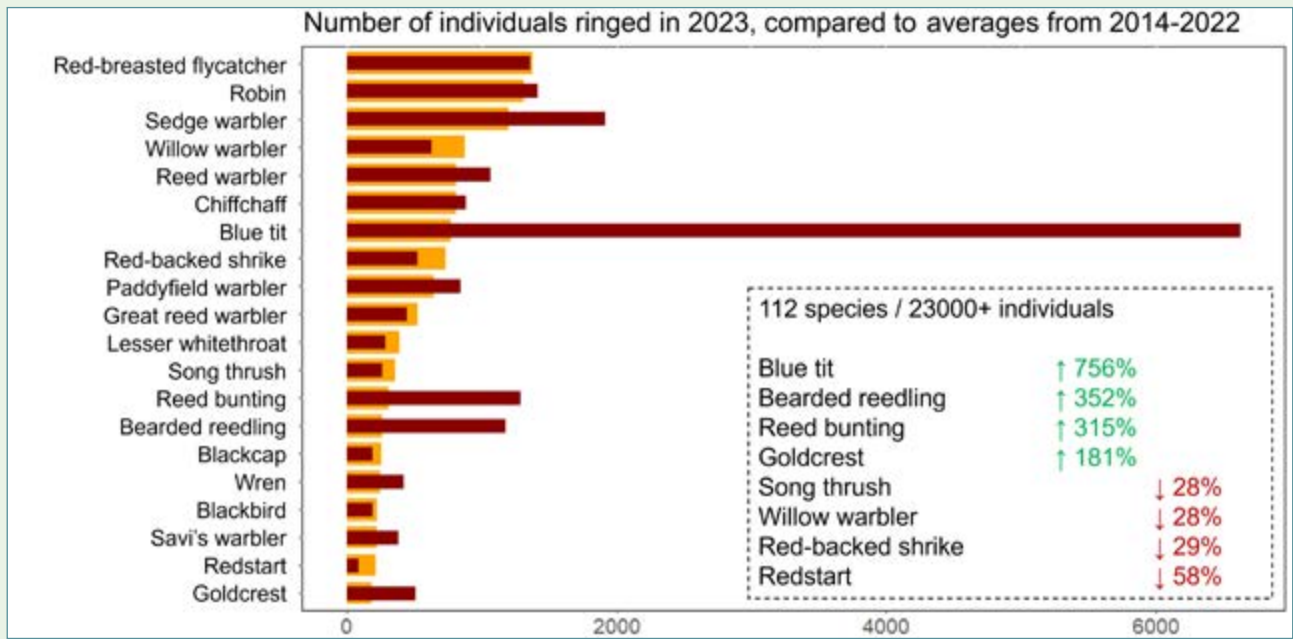
In addition to Blue tits, in comparison to previous yearly averages, we banded significantly more Bearded reedlings, Reed buntings and Goldcrests. In contrast, we ringed fewer Song thrushes, Willow warblers, Red-backed shrikes and Redstarts.

The standardised collection of medium- and long-term data allows for the study of extremely slow ecological processes. With each new year added to the database built up over

the last 10 years, we will have an increasingly clear picture of population changes and changes in migration periods of some species. Thus, our pilot analyses show a slight annual increase in the number of chiffchaffs ringed and a decrease in the number of marked kingfishers and red-backed shrikes.

Of the 110 species ringed, we mention only some of the rarities marked: the Owenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*), Radde's warbler (*Phylloscopus schwarzi*), Hume's warbler (*Phylloscopus humei*), Dusky warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*) and Little bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*). Ringing activity requires constant funding: ring stocks need to be replenished regularly, damaged bird nets need to be replaced, and camp equipment need frequent repairs. Fortunately, as in previous years, a significant part of the running costs has been covered by our friends and supporters. This year's work at the ringing camp was undertaken by 180 volunteers, without whom the camp would simply not exist. We thank the [Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration](#) for their excellent cooperation over the past decade and hope to continue to be their partners in the future.



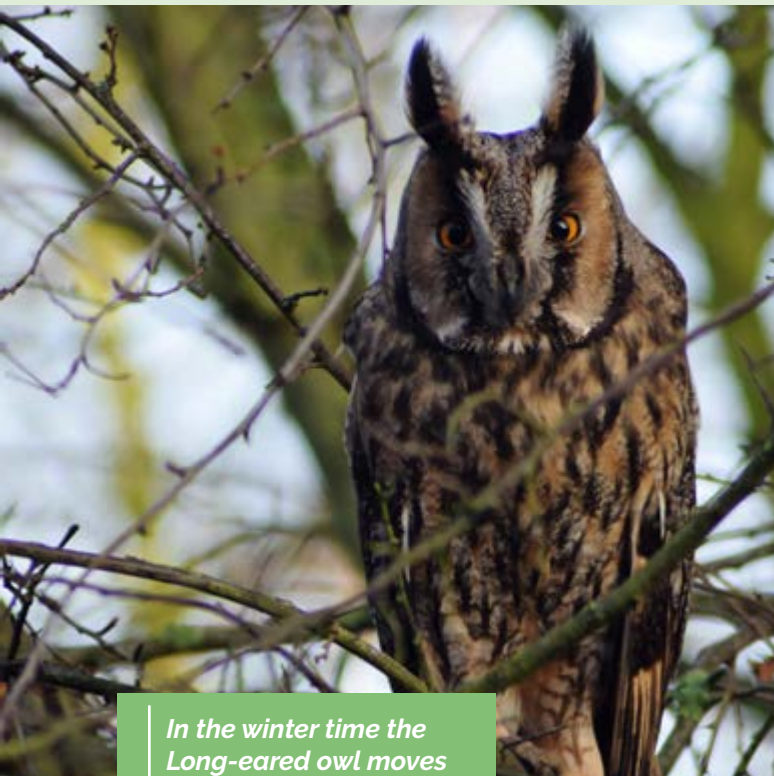


A photograph of a person sitting on a grassy hillside, looking out over a forested landscape. In the foreground, a telescope is mounted on a tripod. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment with pine trees and a clear sky.

## MONITORING PROGRAMMES

Changes in agriculture and forestry, infrastructure projects, tourism or climate change can have a significant impact on animal and plant species and their habitats. Monitoring changes in populations is therefore essential. It allows early detection of negative impacts and helps to develop appropriate conserva-

tion measures. The aim of national censuses and monitoring programmes is to gather information from all over Romania on: species distribution, population numbers and population changes. We are coordinators and participants in several national monitoring programmes.



*In the winter time the Long-eared owl moves into towns*

## MONITORING THE WINTERING LONG-EARED OWL



As part of the Long-eared owl Monitoring Programme, we collect information on trends in the wintering Long-eared owl populations in our country. Since 2015, volunteers have been searching for roosting sites of owls in pre-determined localities according to a standard methodology. In addition to counting the number of individuals found, potential threatening factors are also noted.

Winter 2022-2023:

- 50 volunteers made observations at 95 sites in 18 counties;
- roosting sites were identified at 63 localities, where a total of 1 595 Long-eared owls were counted. No Short-eared owls were observed;
- no Long-eared owls were found in 32 sites;
- the main risk factors: cutting of trees used by these birds.

## WINTER WATERBIRD CENSUS (MIDWINTER)



The Winter Waterbird Census is an international programme that takes place every year in mid-January, when specialists from around the world carry out simultaneous counts of waterbirds in key wetlands. The data from the different countries is processed by [Wetlands International](#).

The large amount of data collected over a long period of time gives a clear picture of the populations of wintering waterbirds. This allows us to identify changes in populations early on, so that we can intervene with conservation measures if necessary. This programme is run in partnership with the Romanian Ornithological Society.

- 714 437 birds were counted, of which 621 434 were waterbirds;
- 164 people carried out the count in 487 wetland sites;
- the three most common species observed were the Mallard (172 742 birds), the Eurasian coot (92 271 birds) and the Greater white-fronted goose (47 600 birds).
- compared to the previous year, the total number of waterbirds decreased by more than 112 000 individuals (it means a decrease of more than 15% compared to 2022).

*The census is held in mid-winter, but in recent years, less and less water freezes and so, the birds disperse*





*Common buzzard - our most frequent bird of prey*

## MONITORING WINTERING POPULATIONS OF RAPTORS



This programme, also based on volunteers, aims to monitor changes in wintering raptor populations in Romania. This is one of our longest running programmes, having started in 2006.

- during the winter of 2022-2023, 74 volunteers from 14 counties carried out field surveys, observing diurnal birds of prey on 61 transects. Observations were made once on 16 transects and twice on 45 transects;
- we observed 1 481 birds of prey of 13 species and 88 individuals of Great grey shrike;
- despite the negative record of the number of individuals observed this winter and the winter population decline of the species (at least in Transylvania), the Common buzzard remains at the top of the list of the most frequent and abundant species observed. The Common kestrel is the second most abundant species and its winter population is increasing.

## MONITORING OF DIURNAL RAPTORS



As species at the top of the food pyramid, raptors are the best bioindicators of the state of the ecosystems around us. Their long-term monitoring is essential as it is the best tool for detecting population changes at regional and national levels.

- 21 experts recorded 473 birds of prey (14 species) and 8 Black storks at 33 sites in 16 quadrats;
- in addition to the birds of prey, the observers also collected data on all the bird species observed, with a total of 108 bird species being reported.

*The Lesser-spotted eagle is one of our migratory birds of prey, which spends the winter in Africa*

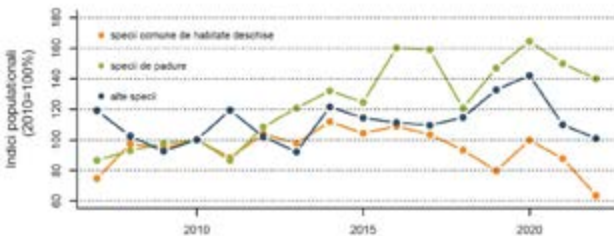




## COMMON BIRD MONITORING (CBM)



The Common Bird Monitoring Programme assesses the general state of nature by analysing common species through long-term observations on a large territorial scale. Volunteers walk a 2x2 km area for two days each year, recording birds seen or heard at 10 different points. The programme is coordinated by the Romanian Ornithological Society in partnership with the Milvus Group Association. The data are centralised at European level by the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) within the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) project.



Trand analysis based on Common Bird Monitoring Programme (orange: common species in open and agricultural habitats; green: forest species; blue: other species)

- 33 observers monitored 44 quadrats;
- population trends were calculated for 143 species;
- population trends reported to EBCC/PECBMS for a record number of 135 species!
- composite index of agricultural and open habitat species continues to decline.



Photo: Mihai Savu - Woodlark



Photo: Vajda József - Common nightingale

## MONITORING NOCTURNAL SPECIES IN OPEN AND SEMI-OPEN HABITATS



The programme aims to monitor several species characteristic of open and semi-open habitats nesting in our country, such as Corn crane, European nightjar, Eurasian scops owl and Eurasian stone-curlew. It is usually a self-funded programme, although we sometimes find funding opportunities. 2023 was a special year as we started this programme 10 years ago. As in previous years, the weather did not make our field surveys any easier this year, but our volunteers managed to cover more areas than in 2022.

*Corn crane - a very mysterious inhabitant of wet grasslands, it attracts attention with its distinctive song*



- 23 volunteers collected data on 37 species from 21 quadrats;
- the most common species were: Eurasian scops owl (155 observations), Common nightingale (123 observations) and Little owl (50 observations);
- the Corn crane population continues to decline (see graph).



## MONITORING THE WINTER CENSUS OF DIPPER



One of our oldest monitoring programmes is the census of White-throated dipper in the Upper Mures Gorge. This activity has been providing us with data since the 1990s. Dippers nest along clean mountain streams and fluctuations in the population of this species can indicate changes in the naturalness of mountain waters. The programme has begun to expand and monitoring - which we hope will become more regular - has begun on other rivers in the country.



- this year the census was organised in 4 areas: in the Upper Mures River Gorge, on the Crişul Repede and two tributaries, on the Mraconia (in the Iron Gates Natural Park) and on 2 portions of the upper course of the Jiu river;

- 72 participants observed 286 White-throated dippers over a total of 138 km on the 4 rivers.

## MONITORING OF THE HUNGARIAN MEADOW VIPER IN TRANSYLVANIA



The programme aims at the long-term monitoring of Hungarian meadow viper (*Vipera ursinii rakosiensis*) populations and their habitats in Transylvania. At present, the programme is largely run on a voluntary basis. The main activity is reptile abundance monitoring, i.e. detecting and tracking changes in the average density of viper populations.

- in 2022 we started to collect detailed distribution data and repeated observations to estimate the abundance of the species in 5 habitats in Transylvania. Unfortunately, in 2023 we were not able to organise all the necessary field trips due to a lack of volunteers. However, the monitoring will continue in 2024, hopefully with greater success. **Contact us if you would like to help!**

- from the 2nd to the 8th of October we organised the first expedition to search for Hungarian meadow vipers in Transylvania. During the seven days, 24 participants searched a total of 71 days. The viper search was supported by the viper search dog unit of the Kiskunság National Park, as Edvárd Mizsei, the coordinator of the EU LIFE project for the conservation of the Hungarian meadow viper in the National Park, and his German shepherd dog Tomi were present. So we can add another five days of dog tracking to the effort. During the expedition we visited eight Hungarian meadow viper sites. The expedition was a success: after 61 years, 5 months and 9 days of the first sighting, we reconfirmed the species in Bonțida (Cluj County);

The programme will continue in 2024. **Register if you want to participate!**



**Species re-discovered in Bonțida (Cluj County)!**



## EUROPEAN MAMMAL ATLAS

After many field trips and literature reviews, the data collection for the new European Mammal Atlas was completed at the end of 2023. The final dataset was submitted in December together with the other two national coordinating organisations (Grigore Antipa National Museum of Natural History, Centre for Bat Research and Conservation).

The main data collection platform of the Milvus Group is the OpenMammalMaps database, with 160 members who have, so far, recorded almost 40 000 observations of mammal presence.

The EMMA2 (European Mammals on Maps) project, involving 42 countries, was launched in 2016 and the new atlas will be published in 2025.

Photo: Koncz-Bisztricz Tamás

## BIRD IDENTIFYING APP FOR ROMANIA



The free app to identify birds in Romania has been downloaded by

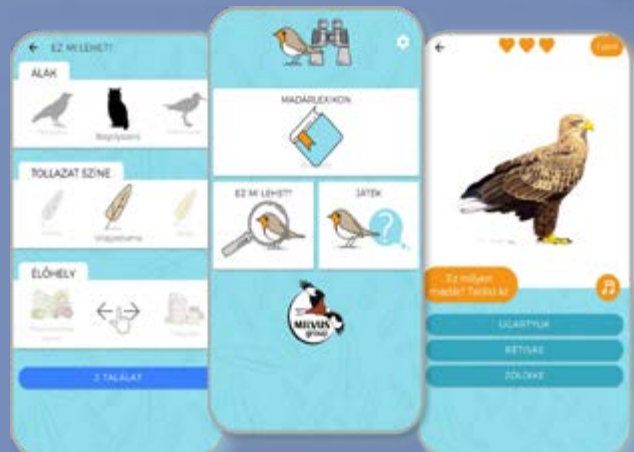
**15 048**  
people

App Store

Google Play



You can download it from the Google PlayStore or the AppStore.



# OPEN NATURE MAPS DATABASES

Collecting data on the presence of different species is a widespread activity around the world in which nature enthusiasts can get involved. By collecting occasional observations for monitoring programmes coordinated by professionals, a growing number of amateurs and nature enthusiasts are making a significant contribution to knowledge and conservation. In addition, many large, national or European studies would not be possible without their contribution.

- there have been many difficulties in developing the databases this year, but we have still managed to add some new features. One of the most important changes has been to update the 'Terms and Conditions' for all the databases to clarify how the data collected can be used;
- our website, which was updated last year, has been further improved. You can now view data interactively for 4 different time periods;

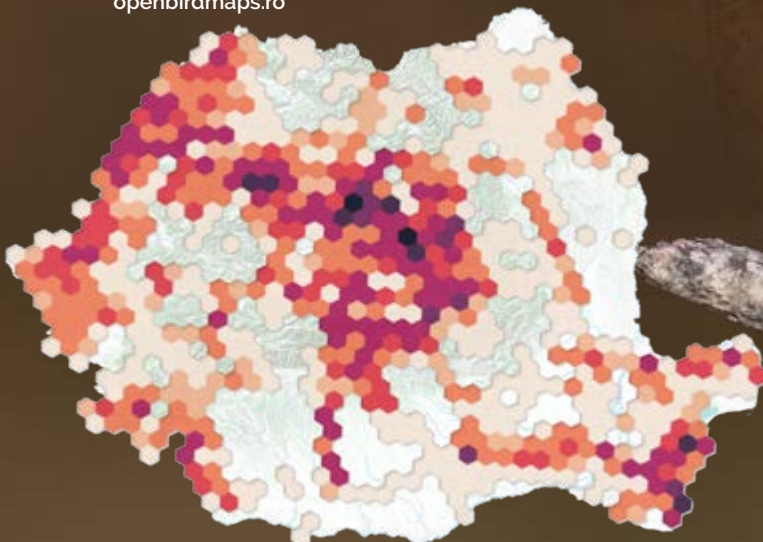


## OpenBirdMaps



- This year 178 631 new records were added to our bird database, collected by 385 users. Together they increased the total number of observations to 2 054 427.

Every observation counts! You can collect data here: [openbirdmaps.ro](http://openbirdmaps.ro)



*Number of observations in an area - the darker the area, the more data.*



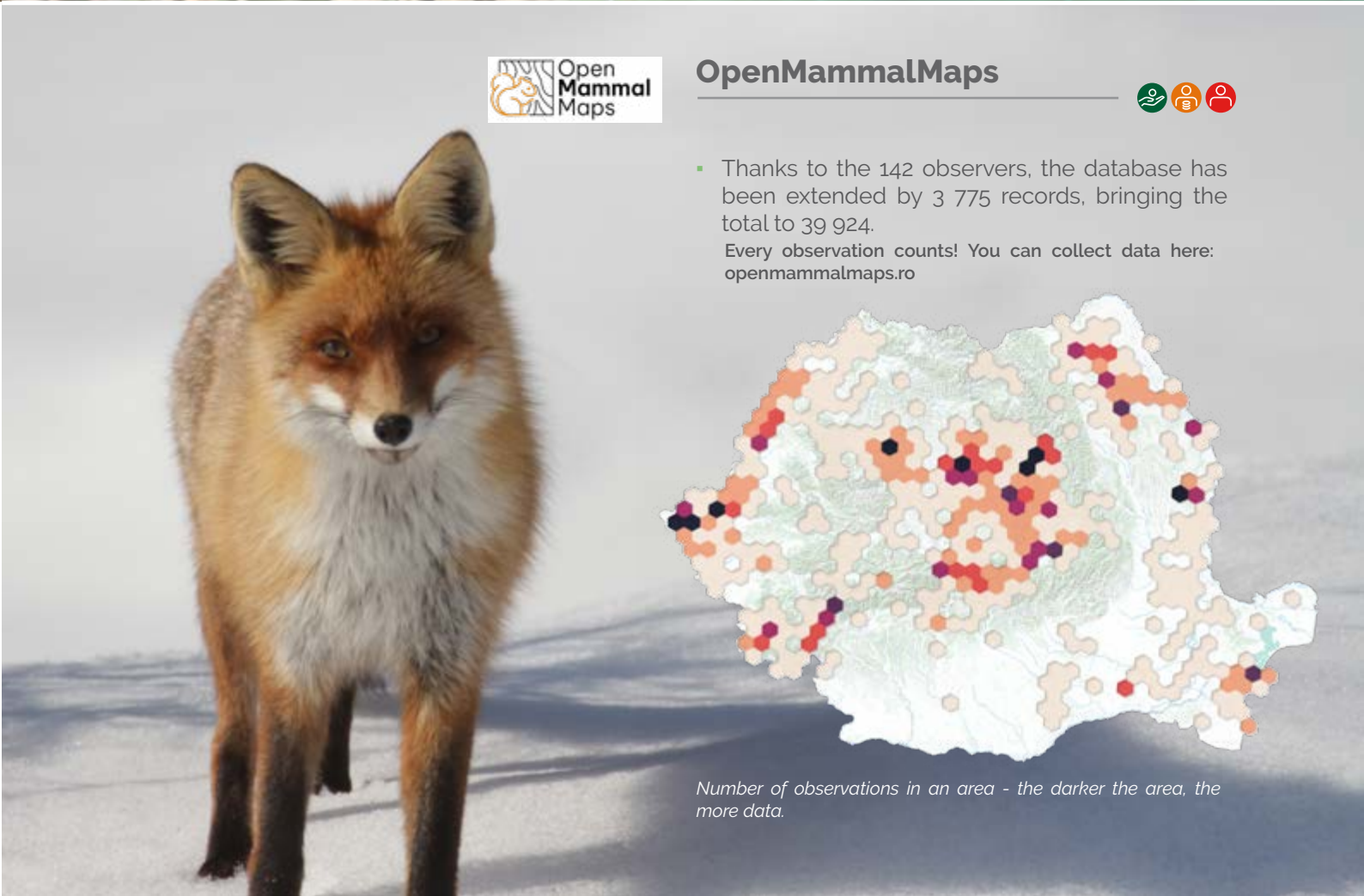
## OpenHerpMaps



- A record 6 604 observations have been entered into our amphibian and reptile database. These were made by over 130 observers. We have reached an important milestone: we have reached over 50 000 entries!

Every observation counts! You can collect data here: [openherpmaps.ro](http://openherpmaps.ro)

*Number of observations in an area - the darker the area, the more data.*



## OpenMammalMaps



- Thanks to the 142 observers, the database has been extended by 3 775 records, bringing the total to 39 924. Every observation counts! You can collect data here: [openmammalmaps.ro](http://openmammalmaps.ro)

*Number of observations in an area - the darker the area, the more data.*



## ONGOING PROJECTS

### GAME OVER? DO NOT LET CLIMATE CHANGE END THE GAME!

**Game over? Don't let end climate change the game!** is an international cooperation project that aims to launch an awareness-raising campaign to draw the attention of younger generations to global warming. Ten civil society organisations from eight Central and Eastern European countries are working together on the project.



#### Why was this project important to us?

- The biodiversity and climate crises cannot be solved without public participation. Raising awareness requires convincing, credible, science-based information that is also attractive. This project has given us the opportunity to reach young people and the general public in a variety of ways.
- We have been supported in our work by people from many different backgrounds. Advertising companies, youth organisations, translators, artists, film industry professionals have all contributed their expertise and enthusiasm to the project's goals.

#### Our four-year project achievements:

- Almost 100 young people were involved, either as volunteers or as ambassadors. They wrote articles, made posters, organised a conference and created an interactive exhibition. They took part in national and international camps and workshops, as well as biodiversity-themed camps, such as the Land Art Camp, which promoted water conservation. Thanks to international cooperation, some of our ambassadors were able to learn about the impact of climate change on nature and communities in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Guatemala. We also welcomed young people from other countries to Milvus Group's camp on the Chituc Spit.
- We also reached out to young people through [festival greening activities](#). Thanks to the project, the Vâltoare Mureșeană/Vásárhelyi Forogtag and Sfera festivals in Târgu Mureș and the 12 Summer Camp Brezoi festivals became more nature-friendly. The project also produced a [Festival Greening Handbook](#), which can help any local festival with ideas on how to run a more environmentally and climate-friendly event. The handbook was also sent to 50 festival organisers.
- In one of the country's most visited zoos, we used the language of youth to raise awareness of the threats to our natural heritage through [graffiti and a banner campaign](#). Thanks to the artists involved, we believe the campaign was even more successful than we expected.
- [Geocaches](#) have been placed in various wetlands and natural attractions characteristic of the country (Padiș Plateau, The realm of the Great Bustards in Salonta, Lake St. Anna, Iron Gates Gorge, Lake Ursu in Sovata, Racoșul de Jos), whose themes draw users' attention to climate change.





- We distributed a board game, which promotes climate-friendly actions, to various organisations and schools.
- We contributed to the development of an educational platform with 12 online lessons and 12 videos, as well as training materials on climate education for teachers to create educational and fun activities for students.



- We have tried to influence decision-makers in a number of ways. For example, we joined a campaign with other European professional and non-governmental organisations to raise awareness of the importance of natural ecosystems and to encourage the public to signal to legislators the importance of the Restore Nature Law.
- Through our own communication channels and the media, with media campaigns, short movies, animations and podcasts, we have tried to get our messages across to as wide an audience as possible.

Campaign results in numbers



Campaign results in numbers



- **Financed by:** Development Education and Awareness Raising Programme (DEAR)
- **Project period:** 2019-2023
- **Partners:** CEEweb for Biodiversity, Christliche Initiative Romero e.V., BROZ – Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Latvian Fund for Nature, Na Mysli, PersonaR Ltd- communication partner



## MORE GRASSLANDS, MORE YIELDS

In Romania, as well as in other European Community countries, there are financial compensations available to farmers, if they comply with specific requirements, with an important role in biodiversity conservation. These are called agri-environment measures. Through the project *Improving Agri-Environmental Policies through Participatory Research and Civic Engagement*, we set out to investigate whether these measures are really beneficial for nature and farmers. The aim of the project is to preserve the natural and landscape heritage of grasslands in Romania.

### Here are the most important activities in 2023:

#### *Public outreach and environmental education:*

- we organised the award ceremony of the competition "With eyes on the grasslands", where we awarded the authors of the most appreciated creative works inspired by the Romanian grasslands;



- we organised two exhibitions - in Oradea and Sfântu Gheorghe - with the winning and finalist works;
- we implemented the "Species of Community Interest that we associate with grasslands" campaign on social media, in order to familiarise the general public with protected plant and animal species that



can be found on grasslands in lowland, hilly and mountainous areas;

- we organised four more environmental education seminars for students on the value and importance of grasslands;







- we updated the website with the [new support measures for farmers](#), cross-compliance requirements, new agri-environmental packages and eligible areas. We also made this information available in four types of leaflet to interested farmers;

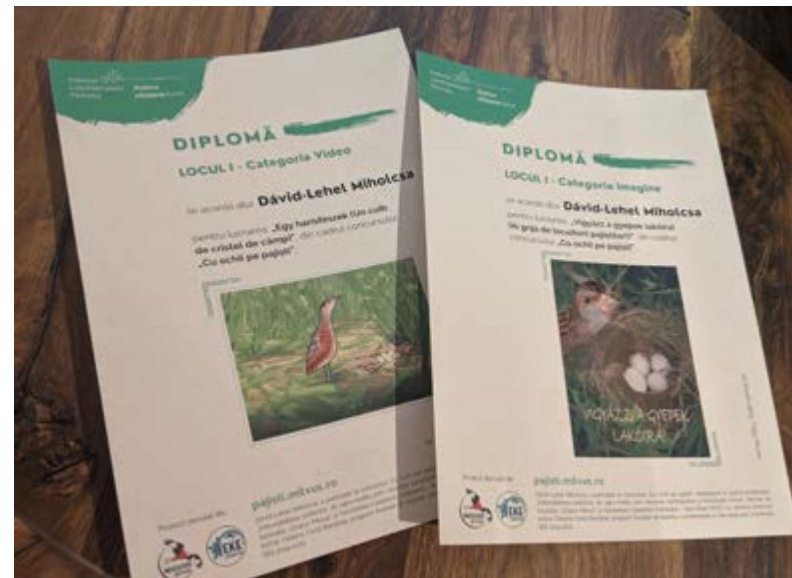
**Research and analysis:**

- we carried out field trips and analysed the data collected;
- we designed and distributed questionnaires on the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2023-2027 and the new agri-environmental packages to Romanian farmers;
- we carried out a comparative analysis of the NSP in Romania and other EU countries;



**Influencing environmental policies and advocacy:**

- we organised five meetings with farmers to consult them on the agri-environmental packages;
- we sent our recommendations for improving the NSP to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development;



**Watchdog:**

- we provided technical expertise for the preparation of the necessary documentation for the court proceedings initiated by the partner of the project, regarding the destruction of the country's grasslands;

**Organisational development:**

- with the help of video production companies, we made [three promotional videos](#) about the association to use in our fundraising campaigns;
- our organisation developed its [strategy](#) for the next seven years.

- **Financed by:** Active Citizens Fund Romania, programme funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants 2014 -2021
- **Project title:** Improving Agri-Environmental Policies through Participatory Research and Civic Engagement
- **Project period:** 2021-2024
- **Partner:** Societatea Carpatină Ardeleană - Satu-Mare (SCA)
- **Webpage:** <https://pajisti.milvus.ro>



## REINTRODUCTION OF THE BEARDED VULTURE AND STRENGTHENING THE CINEREOUS VULTURE POPULATION IN BULGARIA

We are partners in a LIFE vulture conservation project for the first time!

The main objective of the international project (LIFE22-NAT-BG-Bearded Vulture LIFE - 101113869), which started on 1 August 2023 and involves 6 Bulgarian, 1 Dutch and 1 Romanian partner, is the reintroduction of the Bearded vulture in Bulgaria and the strengthening of the population of the recently reintroduced Cinereous vulture in Bulgaria. The 7-year project, coordinated by the Bulgarian conservation organisation Green Balkans, has a budget of €5,173,446.71, of which the Romanian partner (Milvus Group) will receive €99,017.80. The Milvus Group's role in the project is to locate, manage and release vultures that have wandered into Romania,

weakened or injured. In addition to providing assistance, our team has also committed to carry out a feasibility study to assess the conditions, possibilities and risks of vulture reintroduction in Romania and to develop a long-term strategy for the practical steps of a possible reintroduction.



The main benefit of this project is that during the 7 years Milvus Group will start to implement the reintroduction of vultures in our country.

### The main results of 2023:

Informal meetings were held and we attended a conference alongside the leading wildlife organisation for vulture conservation in Europe.

- **Financed by:** EU LIFE programme
- **Project period:** 7 years
- **Partners:** GreenBalkans Bulgaria (project coordinator), FWFF Bulgaria, VCF Netherland, BEPF Bulgaria, EVN EP Bulgaria, SKNPD Bulgaria, NWSFE Bulgaria.

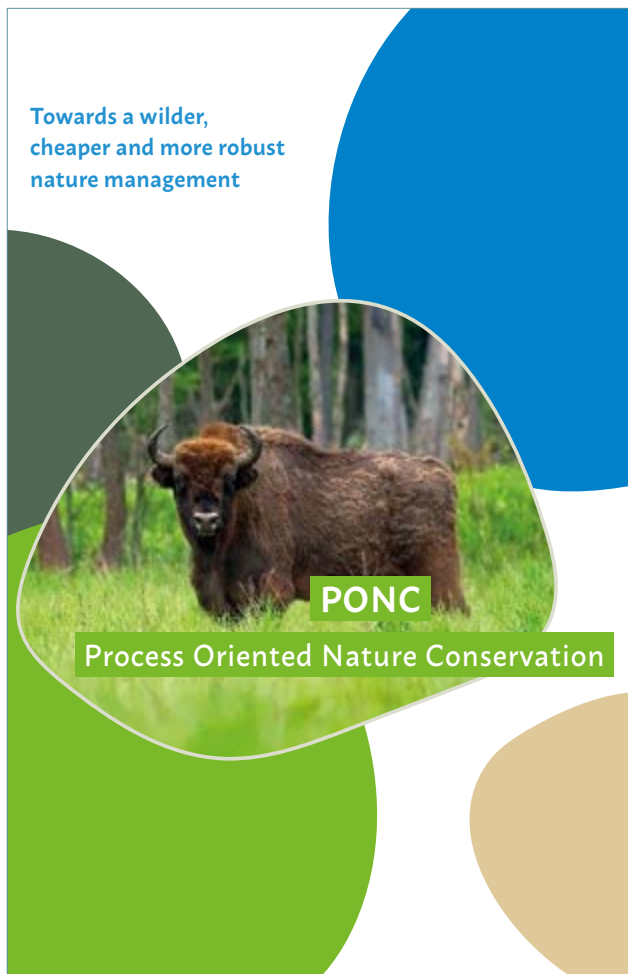


## PROCESS ORIENTED NATURE CONSERVATION

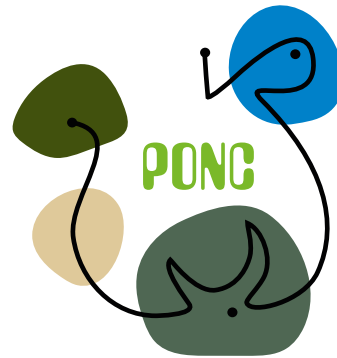
European society faces many challenges, especially those caused by climate change and extreme weather conditions. To preserve biodiversity and ensure social well-being, we need to find solutions that have the least impact on nature.

The project aims to maintain, restore and create a landscape that is closer to nature and can cope with the challenges of a growing human population, intensive agriculture, poor water management and climate change.

For the past three years we have been working on the challenges of natural processes and re-wilding in different parts of Europe. Together with our partners from The Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden in the Erasmus+: Process Oriented Nature Conservation project we have come to several conclusions:



- Water is a key element in our landscape. By making more space for water, by retaining and storing it, we can support biodiversity and at the same time have better control over floods and droughts.



### Process Oriented Nature Conservation:

*wilder, cheaper and more robust nature management*

- Farming and nature are rarely seen as compatible, but they don't have to be perceived as such.
- Local communities can live off the land economically and sustainably, supported by and supporting vital ecosystems.
- When discussing natural processes in the landscape, it is important to take a fresh approach, rethinking the man-made landscape in terms of natural processes and the species they support.

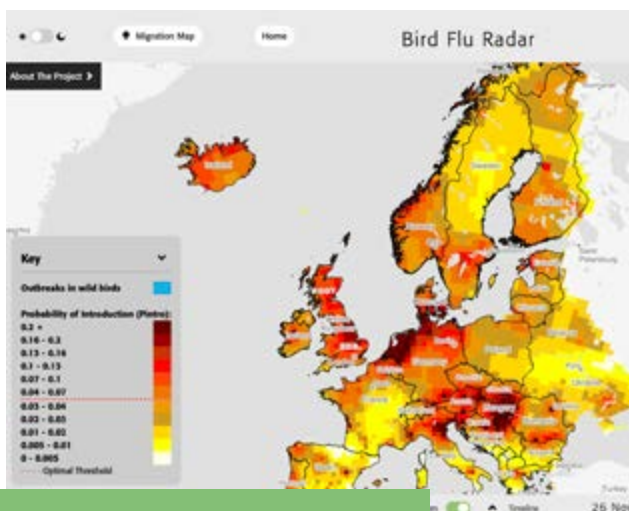
The outcome of the project is a guide that contains useful solutions for both humans and nature. [https://milvus.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023\\_Ponc-e\\_handbook\\_LR.pdf](https://milvus.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023_Ponc-e_handbook_LR.pdf)

- **Financed by:** Erasmus+ Parteneriate de Cooperare (KA2)
- **Project period:** 2020 – 2023
- **Partners:** Natuurinvest (BE) - project coordinator, Milvus Group (RO), Pro Natura (SE), Agency for Nature and Forest (BE), Ark Nature Development (NL), Fjallbete (SE), Knepp Estate (UK)



## LIFE EUROBIRDPORAL REINFORCEMENT

Across Europe, more than 120 000 professional and amateur ornithologists use a mobile phone app to record the birds they see and upload them to on-line databases. Almost every ornithological association or institute in each country has its own database (and in Romania there are two, [OpenBirdMaps](#), managed by the Milvus Group, and [Ornitodata](#), created by the Romanian Ornithological Society), as well as large multinational or even global systems (such as [eBird](#), [Observation](#), [BirdTrack](#), [Ornitho](#), [iNaturalist](#), etc.). From these diverse and fragmented data sources, it is impossible to filter and analyse data on a continental scale. Since its launch in 2015, the [EuroBirdPortal](#) has resolved this situation and now aggregates observations of 137 migratory bird species from 21 data collection portals in one place



*BirdFluRadar forecast of avian influenza transmission risk at the end of November 2023*

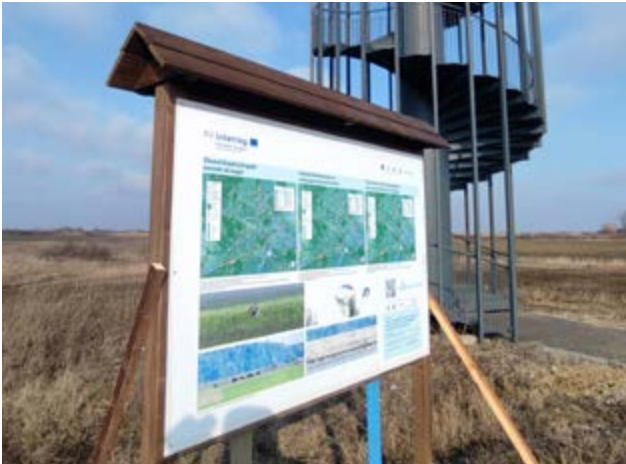
(currently only OpenBirdMaps observations from Romania are uploaded daily). However, progress has not stopped and a new project called "[LIFE EBP reinforcement](#)" has been launched.

**According to the project, the following activities will be carried out:**

- launch of new online portals in the countries of South West Europe (Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro) and the Republic of Moldova.
- improving data quality (mainly through comprehensive species lists and other systematically collected data) in several other countries, including Romania.
- the pooling and joint modelling of bird migration and dispersal data has led to the development of a new product - BirdFluRadar - which can be used to predict the likelihood of the occurrence and spread of avian influenza. This initiative is of huge practical and economic importance and it is no coincidence that it has been endorsed and supported by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

- **Financed by:** LIFE Nature, „Improving the capabilities of the EuroBirdPortal project in order to boost its contribution towards EU policy objectives under the Birds Directive and the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy”
- **Project period:** 2023 – 2026
- **Parteners:** Consorci Centre de Cincia i Tecnologia Forestal de Catalunya (coordinator)

## CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE NATURAL VALUES FROM THE SALONTA - BÉKÉSCSABA CROSSBORDER AREA, ROHU-14 - THE NATURE CORNER



This cross-border project aims to preserve and promote the existing natural heritage. The two Romanian project partners - Salonta Municipality and the Oradea branch of the Milvus Group Association - are carrying out activities aimed at conserving the last viable population of the Romanian Great bustard.



### Main activities in 2023:

- we have prepared technical reports (flyways, predators, threats, conservation proposals) to help plan future conservation work;
- after more than two years of documentation, writing, editing and translating the texts and selecting the images, we have reached the final form of the thematic guide "Trails in the Realm of the Great bustards in Salonta", printed in three languages (Romanian, Hungarian and English) and available online at the website [www.dropia.eu](http://www.dropia.eu) and in physical form at the Visitor Centre in Salonta;
- we prepared the scientific material in Romanian, Hungarian and English for the information panels at the Visitor Centre and the hiking trails, and then our project partner, the Salonta Municipality made and installed the panels;
- although this project has ended, we have reapplied to the new call of the Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary programme to achieve the objectives of our Great bustard Conservation Programme;
- For more details, news and interesting information about the completed project and the Great bustard population in Salonta, please visit the project website ([dropia.eu](http://dropia.eu)) and the project's social media pages (Facebook, Instagram).



- **Financed by:** the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund, with the support of the Government of Romania and Hungary, under the Interreg V-A Programme.
- **Project period:** 2018 – 2021
- **Partners:** Municipality of Salonta, Municipality of Békés, Körösök Völgye Natúrpark Association
- **Webpage:** <https://www.dropia.eu/>

# CONTRACTUAL SERVICES



## CENSUS OF THE POPULATION OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE AND CAPERCAILLIE IN THE FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS

In 2020 we signed a contract with the Conservation Carpathia Foundation to develop an action plan for the conservation of the Golden eagle in the Făgăraș Mountains, which involves the following activities:

- Monitoring nesting success;
- Analysis of the feeding of the species during the nesting period;
- Tracking the birds' range of movement and how they use their territory;
- Marmot population census and analysis of breeding success;
- Census of the Western capercaillie population;

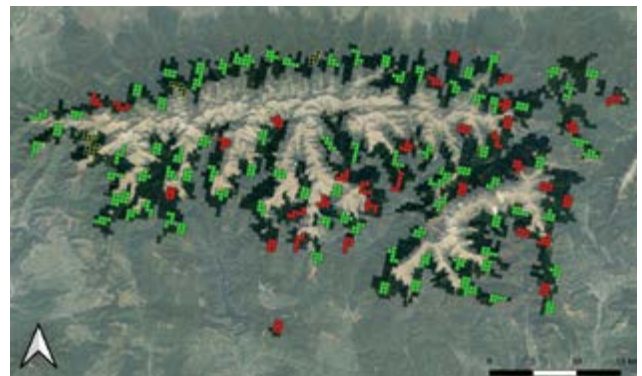
All activities are part of a [large conservation project](#).

### EVALUATION OF CAPERCAILLIE

Information on the distribution and density of the species and, in case of future repeat observations, on population changes is collected by designating 120 territorial units in Făgăraș Mountains, from which data on the presence of the capercaillie are collected. A territorial unit consists of 6 squares of 500x500 m, where 2 observers record signs of capercaillie presence (individuals, feathers, droppings, tracks, etc.) during a 1 hour walk of 1 km.

#### The main results accomplished in 2023:

- 23 territorial units were visited this year, bringing the total to 116 since the study began. Evidence of the species was found in 84 of these.



Green - area checked, capercaillie definitely present  
Red - area checked, no capercaillie present  
Yellow - no verification

### EVALUATION OF GOLDEN EAGLE

In previous years, nests had been identified in 3 territories. This year we checked known nests in these territories and, after a few days of persistent observation, were able to identify the active nest of a new pair nesting in a fourth territory. Of the four pairs observed, two managed to raise chicks, but unfortunately the young of one pair disappeared from the nest at some point. The reasons for this are unknown. One chick was tagged in order for us to follow the chicks' movement after leaving the nest.



- At the end of the breeding season, one of the nests of one pair was consolidated (rebuilt) as it had been completely destroyed by storms.



## EVALUATION OF SONGBIRDS AND WOODPECKERS

From 2022, we have added two new protocols for monitoring bird communities to assess the impact of ecological restoration activities on them. Over two breeding seasons, we will visit pre-determined monitoring points in restored and reference habitats, using one method for songbird species and a more specific method for woodpecker species.

- we counted songbirds at 60 points over two years (2022-2023);
- we started counting woodpeckers at 16 points.

- **Project coordinator:** Foundation Conservation Carpathia
- **Partners:** Association Ocolul Silvic Carpathia, Hunting Association Piatra Craiului Făgăraș Conservation, SC Carpathia Agro & Finance SRL, Conservation Capital Consulting Ltd., Basarab I – Argeș County Gendarmerie Inspectorate and ProPark – Foundation for Protected Areas.
- **Project title:** Creation of a Wilderness Reserve in the Southern Carpathian Mountains, Romania (LIFE18 NAT/ RO/001082)
- **Financed by:** EU LIFE Nature programme and Arcadia Foundation through the ELP programme
- **Contract period:** 2019-2024

## VULTURE REINTRODUCTION IN FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS

The Milvus Group has long been interested in the idea of reintroducing vultures, which have been extinct in our country for more than a century. The first activities took place 20 years ago, when we were asked by the Retezat National Park to carry out a feasibility study in the Retezat Mic. The study concluded that it would be too difficult to reintroduce eagles and no action was taken at that time.

This year, at the request of the Foundation Conservation Carpathia, a similar study will be carried out in the Făgăraș Mountains.



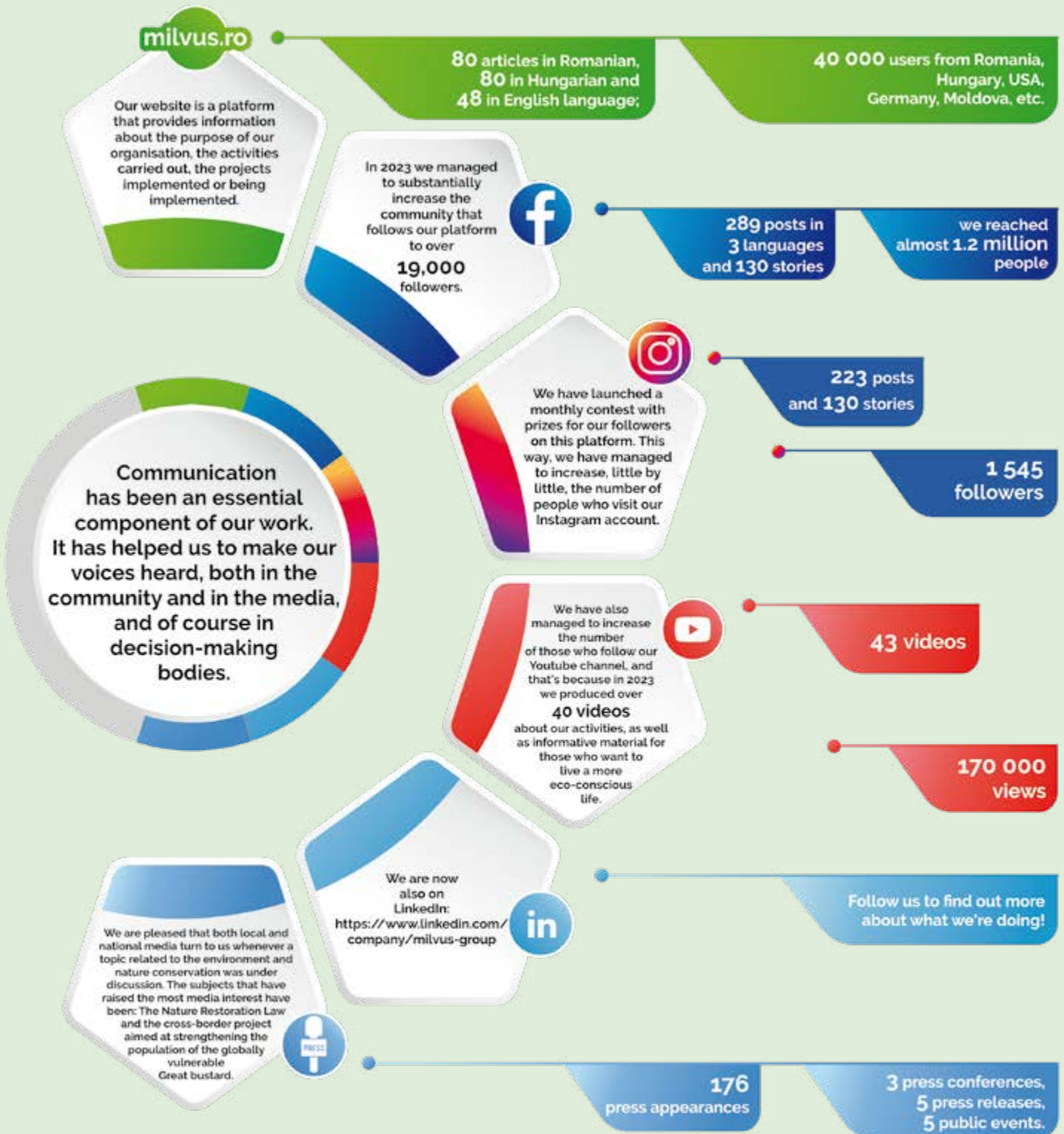
### Highlights from 2023:

The successful reintroduction of vultures in our neighbourhood (Bulgaria) and across Europe has changed the landscape since the 2000s. Much experience has been gained and shared, success stories have followed and the reintroduced vulture populations have come closer to us.

The feasibility study is underway, field studies have been completed on time and the first reintroduction site has been selected with the help of partners. Experts believe that the time is now right to start reintroducing the large species (Eurasian griffon vulture, Cinereous vulture and Bearded vulture) in Romania. It is therefore planned to start developing and implementing a plan with concrete steps from next year.

- **Financed by:** Foundation Conservation Carpathia
- **Contract period:** 01.06.2023 - 31.03.2024
- **Partners:** Vulture Conservation Foundation, Green Balkans

# HOW WE MADE OURSELVES HEARD





# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Due to the growing interest in environmental education, we have decided to recruit an additional teacher for the 2023-2024 school year. As a result, we have managed to organise more than 160 ac-



tivities this year. In total, over 3,000 children from 53 educational institutions attended our environmental education lessons.

There was great interest in activities organized either in classrooms or in nature. The weather con-



ditions didn't matter, as we were greeted by kindergartners in raincoats and wellies, even in the pouring rain. Not even distance was an obstacle, as we managed to pay a visit and talk to the children in Vadu (Constanța County).

In addition to our traditional trips to Rigmani in Mures County, we hiked with a large group of children in the Vărghiș Gorge in Harghita County and together we explored the natural values of the reserve.



Once again, the Milvus Camp in Senetea (Harghita County) was the reward for schoolchildren who actively participated in our ActivityBox competition and showed a special interest in nature conservation and species.

All in all, we can say that we have had a very good year and we would like to thank our volunteers who have always been present whenever we needed their help and who have set a good example for the children.



## Our activities in numbers:

- we organized 161 activities for kids
- we were present in 53 schools and kindergartens
- we met with 3 038 children
- we organized 10 trips

See our offer here:  
<https://milvus.ro/en/ecological-education/>

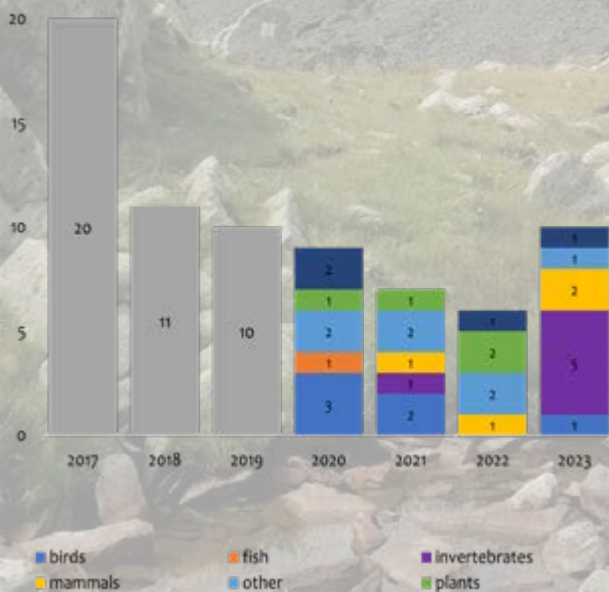


# THE MILVUS SCHOLARSHIP

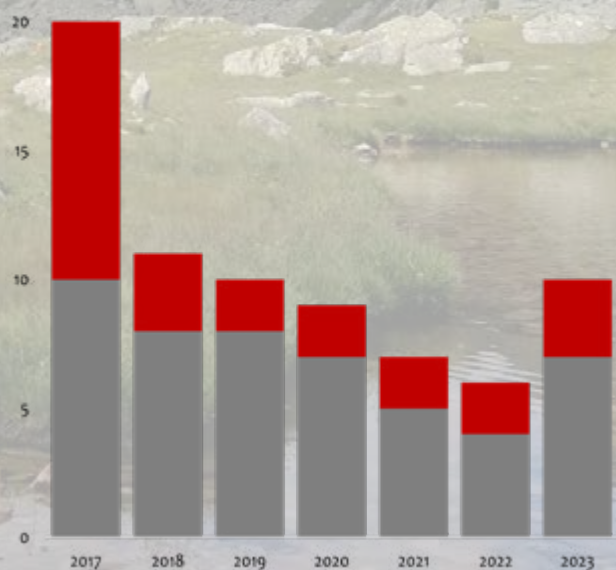
It's been our tradition since 2005 to award the Milvus Scholarship to students who are conducting research in the field of ecology and nature conservation. In 2023 we received ten applications for our scholarship programme, of which one was awarded a grant of 4,000 lei and two were awarded a grant of 2,000 lei each. Thus, Boglárka Opra studied arthropod communities in quasi-virgin forests and cultivated forests, Kinga Kovács initiated a citizen science study on urban bees in Cluj-Napoca and Henrietta Fejér investigated the habitat use of two butterfly species and their hosts.



The number of submitted projects by taxonomic groups



The ratio of funded (red) and unfunded (grey)



# WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE

2023 was another busy year at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre. The large number of calls to the Centre's emergency number is a sign of the growing interest in wildlife conservation in Romania.

The cases reported by citizens also varied according to the season. While in spring we received 20-30 calls a day about chicks that had fallen out of their nests, in summer the number of storks requiring our intervention increased, while in autumn we had to deal with animals injured during migration.

As for the species that came under our care, we are talking about 150 wild animals, most of which were White storks (30), Common kestrel (13), Red foxes (11) and Tawny owls (9). The patients came from all over the country, thanks to a very good cooperation with veterinarians from different regions of Romania.



This year we had the pleasure of rehabilitating two White-tailed eagles, a protected species. They were



released after they recuperated and we were able to fit them with satellite devices. Our joy was short-lived, however, as within a few weeks both birds died (one from electrocution and the other from unknown causes).

We also released 10 adult European pond turtles during this period, although one injured turtle is still recovering with us. Of the 12 hatchlings that have successfully hatched from eggs laid by a turtle in captivity since 2021, all have been released into the wild. While we were unable to help one Greek tortoise hatchling that was brought to us in very poor condition, an adult turtle was released by our colleagues in Dobrogea and will hopefully live out its days safely.

And to end on a positive note, in September we released 14 rehabilitated birds (10 White storks, 2 Common kestrels, 1 Little owl and 1 Common buzzard) in a single day, a record for 2023 in terms of number of releases/day.

We can only thank veterinarian Levente Borka-Vitális of Vets4Wild for the care and dedication with which he has treated the wild animals that have come to our centre, as well as all the vets in the country who have assisted in these cases.

- ✈️

**150**  
patients  
in our centre
- 🐾

**79**  
injured animals  
rehabilitated  
and released
- ☎️

**3 000**  
phone calls

# MILVUS INTERNATIONAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

A photo that really is worth a thousand words, with a powerful message, a look at the harmful impact we humans have on the fragile ecosystem. This is the winning photo of the 14th *Milvus International Nature Photography Contest*. Lalith Ekanayake from Sri Lanka chose to capture a herd of wild elephants feeding on a garbage dump, and the jury decided that this entry deserved the Grand Prize.



This year, the award ceremony and the opening of the exhibition took place in Brasov, during the *Lynx Festival*.

Milvus Group was one of the partner organisations of this festival and we would like to congratulate the organising team for their commitment and efforts to promote the beauty of nature through photography and documentary film. The festival featured national and international award-winning documentaries, several special guests from home and abroad, photo exhibitions and numerous events for young and old alike.

The award-winning works of the *Milvus Photocontest* could be admired during June in Brasov, in the alley in front of the Town Hall, and then in Targu Mures, during the *Vâltoarea Mureșană Festival*. We congratulate all the participants and winners of this photo competition. We hope that their pictures will touch the hearts of as many people as possible and inspire new generations.





# ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION, CIVIC ACTIVISM

Milvus Group is best known to the public for its work in protecting birds and other animals, which is mainly carried out in the field. This is true, but a very important part of our work is also influencing legislation that affects nature. It is very important to intervene in a targeted way to save rare, endangered species - our Saker falcon conservation programme is a good example. But we have to be aware that, for example, a good or even a bad law or an agricultural subsidy scheme can have a very strong impact on the situation of all grasslands and arable land in Romania and, implicitly, on the species found in these habitats. This is not a small area, as more than 60% of Romania's territory is under some form of agricultural cultivation. Unfortunately, most of the political decisions affecting agriculture in recent decades have not been nature-friendly, so it is no coincidence that the populations of bird species that are somehow related to agriculture, either by nesting or feeding, are in decline.

We therefore believe that influencing political decisions that significantly change the state of nature is an extremely important, even if unpopular, task for nature conservation.

In 2023, our main activities in this area were:

- 1• The most important nature conservation legislation at EU level in 2023 - and probably in the last two decades - was the Nature Restoration Law. With this ground-breaking piece of legislation, the EU recognises that the environmental crisis cannot be stopped by preserving what is left of nature, but must be actively restored. So, as the name suggests, it aims to restore Europe's habitats that have been destroyed by humans. European legislation is complicated, but the three main insti-



tutions - the Commission, the Parliament and the EU Council - have to agree on the final text of the law. Unfortunately, during the legislative process, many important elements have been omitted or removed by short-sighted politicians, mainly due to the effective action of the agriculture, industry and fisheries lobbies, but even the current weakened form could go a long way towards solving the environmental and climate crisis. That is, if the final form, jointly drafted by the European

Parliament and the Council, is voted on early next year. On behalf of Milvus Group, we have been doing everything we can to ensure that the law is adopted - collecting signatures, raising awareness of its importance in the media, personally delivering the petition to all Romanian MEPs and consulting some of them personally.

For the benefit of our common future, we hope that all our efforts were not in vain.

- 2• One of our main areas of focus remains the regulation of agriculture, and we have not given up trying to make the Ministry of Agriculture's new National Strategic Plan (NSP) more nature-friendly. Again this year, we made proposals for improvements to the agri-environmental packages, but we have not yet succeeded in making any changes, despite the fact that the new rules are very unfavourable to small farmers and that whole communities have been 'excluded' from the support area, despite their rich natural resources.
- 3• Romania's main piece of nature conservation legislation (transposition of EU nature directives into national law), Government Emergency Ordinance 57/2007, is long overdue for reform. To this end, the Ministry of Environment started negotiations and public debates two years ago. This year, NGOs also had the opportunity to contribute to this process. Milvus Group, together with the member organisations of the Natura 2000 Coalition, submitted numerous proposals. There has been no response from the Ministry and it is not yet known when the debate on this important piece of legislation will be concluded.

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## ■ How we raised our money



**74.02%**

National and international projects

1 332 751 lei

**13.40%**

Sponsorship, individual donations, 3.5%, membership fees

241 349 lei

**9.27%**

Other (bank interest, photo competition entry fees)

166 892 lei

**3.31%**

Contractual services

59 593 lei

## ■ How we used our funds



**79.98%**

The most significant part of our association's budget is spent on nature conservation activities

2 828 729 lei

**10.71%**

Administrative costs (financial personal, bank fees, server maintenance)

378 709 lei

**6.13%**

Communication and branding costs are essential for the efficient running of our activities

216 658 lei

**3.19%**

Office rent, utilities, office equipment

112 902 lei

|   |                            |                            |                        |          |           |                 |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Sponsorships and Individual Contributions | 58.24%                     | 27.01%                     | 5.12%                  | 4.90%    | 3.67%     | 1.05%           |
|   | Sponsorship from companies | Donations from individuals | 3.5% of the income tax | Galantom | Swimathon | Membership fees |



**Further supporters:**

- ADONIS IMPORT EXPORT SRL
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- VITALMOTOR
- SABRA GROUP
- HRISTIANA SRL
- BIG CONSULTING

Every support counts! You can do it too: <https://milvus.ro/en/donate/>

## OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

It has been an unlucky year in which some legislative changes and regulations issued in the last days of the year have affected the decisions of sponsors. For example, from 2024, sponsorship of NGOs will no longer be deductible from the income tax of micro-enterprises. And we are facing a difficult year with a focus on political events, in which the non-governmental sector is likely to be in a difficult situation again.

As we do not receive any government support, all our activities are supported by projects and community support (sponsorships, donations). As project funding changes and decreases from year to year, it is a real challenge to maintain a team of professionals over the long term and to implement activities that do not depend on projects. Fortunately, community support is growing and it is a great pleasure for us to see that our principles and goals are shared by more and more people.

Thank you for your financial support so far, without which we would not have been able to get through the difficult times and continue many essential activities for which we do not have project funding.

We would like to thank our sponsors for the confidence they have shown in our organisation and for their continued awareness of the difference they can make. Their support has helped to maintain the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, the Chituc Spit ringing camp, and some of the organisation's educational and core activities.

Thank you to individuals who have donated and redirected 3.5% of their income tax!

**Thanks a lot for your support too!**

# GALANTOM

**Galantom**  
FUNDRAISING PLATFORM

In 2023, we are proud of 6 gallants who, thanks to their generosity, donated their birthday to our organisation, raising more than 12 000 lei for Milvus Group activities.



The Galantom platform has been developed by OneKind Association and People for Sport Association to make it easier for people in Romania to support the causes they believe in. Through the platform, you can collect donations from your personal network: relatives, close friends, colleagues, friends on social media sites, to support NGO projects that bring change for the better in the community.

If you would like to share your best self with your loved ones, you can use this opportunity to support our projects and help the environment. Through galantom.ro, you can encourage your friends who are buying you a birthday present to make a donation to one of our causes that you support. The principle is simple and ancient: *"It is better to give than to receive"*.

Here you can have a look at the cases of the Milvus Group: <https://milvus.galantom.ro/>

What should you do?

Contact us at [office@milvus.ro](mailto:office@milvus.ro)



# SWIMATHON SWIMMING FOR YOU AND OUR CITY!



Swimathon is a fundraising event organised by the Community Foundations Movement in several cities in Romania, through which companies, organisations, initiative groups and individuals can carry out fundraising campaigns to support various community involvement initiatives/causes/projects.

A project of the heart - A more nature-friendly city, five unselfish swimmers and one ambassador. That's how we prepared for Swimathon Mures 2023, the fundraising event organised by the Mures Community Foundation. Our team members swam for our city, so that the residents could get to know the diversity of nature in the city better. The information boards, made with the money raised by our swimmers (more than 8 000 lei), will be installed next spring.

  
**Swimathon**  
Mures





# MILVUS VOLUNTEERS



**Magyari Szeréna:** *"By volunteering at Milvus Group, I can help a team that works with heart and soul to protect nature. They are committed to involving young and old alike in their activities, as one of the main goals of their work is to maintain a balance between people and nature and to raise awareness of the importance of this balance. Their dedication is inspiring and I am grateful to be part of this mission by helping them in their work."*

**Biro Szabolcs:** *"I've been volunteering with Milvus Group for a year and I feel that it has brought big changes in my life. It has brought me much closer to birds and animals. And it has also given me a lot of pluses to my personality, I have become more open to people and new things. I am very proud to be a volunteer and I don't plan to stop any time soon."*

**Kiss Lilla:** *"I am very happy to volunteer here at Milvus Group. I have learned a lot and I have made good friends. I really like going out in the field, the company is good and I enjoy every part of it. I never went as if I had to do this because I was a volunteer, but I was always happy to go, anytime, no matter if the temperature was high or low. I'm happy to be here with you and to volunteer."*

**Nicolas Pinson (Toulouse, Franța):** *"Regarding the field work, while tough (for normal people like me), it was very enjoyable, because I learned a lot from you (about birds, the area, etc.). It is a very interesting experience for someone with no experience with any scientific field work."*

**Szakács Alexandra:** *"I feel that volunteering has changed a lot of things in my life. I can help a real team and protect nature at the same time. I hope to learn a lot more about nature and animals here at Milvus Group. Thank you for everything and for allowing me to be part of such a wonderful association."*

**Horváth-Kovács Sámuel:** *"I like volunteering because I learn new things, but I also have fun. Volunteering has helped me a lot in testing my strength and in developing my skills not only on a theoretical level but also on a practical level."*

**Dénes Anna:** *"Volunteering is a great opportunity for me to do something practical for a cause I care about, while learning a lot and gaining new experiences. All this in a good atmosphere, in the company of people who are happy to share their knowledge and with whom it doesn't seem like work to do the job. I like to spend my free time doing it because I know it gives me new experiences, it shapes my view of the world, it makes me part of a community and I always have the good feeling that I have been useful in achieving a common goal."*

Without the work of our volunteers, none of these activities would have been possible. Thank you!





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