

Project Update: June 2016

In April 2016, we established three supplementary feeding sites for vultures on the territory of Usturt State Nature Reserve. Two camera traps have been mounted at each feeding site. Sites are located along the western chink of the Ustyurt plateau (chink is a local name for chalk escarpment) at distance from 20 to 50 km from each other. From April to June 2016, we have visited all sites four times with an interval of about 2 weeks and deposited at each site around 25 kg of an offal and other animal byproducts on each occasion.

During this period, camera traps installed at feeding sites captured about 700 photos of various animals. From photographs it was found that three species of vultures visited our feeding sites: Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) – a few individuals of different ages, cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) – one individual and griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) – one individual. In addition, camera traps captured another three species of birds and seven species of mammals.

From 31st May to 6th June 2016, we conducted vulture/birds of prey nest counting survey and examined about 100 km of western Ustyurt chink, which is about 60% of the total length of the escarpment within the reserve. During the survey we found three nests of cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), two nests of Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), one nest of golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), two nests of long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*), nine nests of common kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*), and three nests of raven (*Corvus corax*).



Mounting of camera trap at feeding site.

Egyptian vultures at feeding site (on the left- juvenile, on the right- adult individual).



Cinereous vulture at feeding site.