

## BOOK REVIEWS

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SUŠIĆ, G. & GRBAC, I. (2002). *Želite li Stvarnost ili Mit?/Do you want Reality or Myth?* Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb. ISBN 953-6645-15-7. 120 pp.

The story of the Eurasian Griffon in Croatia, especially on the Kvarner archipelago (islands of Krk, Cres, Plavnik, etc.), leading up to an Exhibition. Only 90 pairs breed in Croatia, all in the archipelago, of which 70 pairs live on Cres. There are five chapters here, of which the first one is unusual – “Why should we protect species, and why Eurasian Griffons?” As Sušić subtitles it, this is a heartfelt essay on conservation. We need a solution to the problem he says, but we have greedy man (= humans, are there any women there?) and loving man. I think that Sušić is rather despondent; certainly in spite of official protection for the vulture, this is in fact ineffective.

Four chapters follow: the position of griffons in the world of vultures; the griffon vulture and man, starting with Egypt, the painting of Prometheus, the Parsees, etc.; specifically the vulture in Croatia; and threats and protection for the bird. Thanks to Graham McMaster, the translator, we can read this interesting and useful book in English. I wonder how the griffon is doing now? In spite of the presence of the Caput Insulae-Beli Eco-Center on the island of Cres, “is there any hope?” he asks (p.83). This book is full of photographs, and is a good summary of the vulture in Croatia.

MOIR, J. (2006). *Return of the Condor*. Lyons Press, Guilford (Conn.). 223 pp. ISBN 978-1-59228-949-3.

A very readable and at times quite gripping tale, beginning mostly in 1980. Relies heavily on Noel Snyder’s activities and opinions, and to a lesser extent Jan Hamber. Chapter 4 describes Carl Koford’s research, from March 1939, and there on p. 49 is perhaps the key point made in the book. Koford climbed into nests and handled and photographed the chicks, apparently recorded accurately in his thesis. But in the 1953 monograph, and subsequently, the condor has undergone an “amazing transformation” – it has become a sensitive species, and easily disturbed by humans! This has severely affected the subsequent actions with the bird.

On p. 105 is the second key point – “the words “lead” and “condor” do not appear together until Noel Snyder came along.” As they say, the rest is history. (And now we are doing the same research on lead in Africa. And probably the same results and problems). Chapter 11, “AC’s day in court”, well describes the shooting of a condor by Britton Cole Lewis, and the ensuing court case after some good detective work.

After some awful setbacks in the 1980s, and the successful trapping of the last wild condor in April 1987, the programme was back on course (sort of) in the 1990s. This enjoyable book finishes with the release back into the wild of that very last wild condor (AC9). As we now know, the programme has gone from strength to strength; this book describes the crucial period of 1980 to 2005, with just a little

bit of philosophising. No way is the bird doomed to extinction! Finally, the book tells the reader where to view condors, and gives 10 web sites for further information. Neat.

ELIOTOUT, B. (2007). *Le vautour fauve*. Delachaux et Niestlé, Paris. ISBN 978-2-603-01436-3. 192 pp.

This is an A5-sized book, in the publishers' collection (Les Sentiers du Naturaliste), which includes the Bearded Vulture by Jean-François Terrasse (2001), reviewed in *Vulture News*, 2006, 55: 72-73. The present book is beautifully produced and full of photographs, drawings, and maps. It is structured around nine chapters, starting with Sentier généalogique, within which he shows the other seven species of *Gyps*, and finishing on Sentier de l'observation, on the last page of which is a griffon gliding over a town/village, which unfortunately is not named. The graph on p. 27 shows a welcome increase in all four populations in France (Pyrénées, Causses, and two in the Alps) to about 800 breeding pairs in 2005. Another graph on p. 127 shows the breeding productivity in the Causses to have levelled off at 70%. On p. 36 Eliotout gives a small box on how to differentiate males and females: shape of the head, shape of the wings in flight, and to him the best one is the plumage, the female "often" being "paler" than the male!

Every topic is covered, many in special 'boxes' and all illustrated, even a sheep-bell around the neck of one bird! Part of one chapter deals with the "pioneering" and very successful re-introduction of the griffon into the Grands Causses, complete with a photo of Michel Terrasse. Altogether a marvellous and marvellously-presented book.

[www.delachaux-niestlé.com](http://www.delachaux-niestlé.com)

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