



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Education, Heritage,
Environment, Energy and
Climate Change

PRESS RELEASE

No: 365/2017

Date: 5th May 2017

Environment and GONHS launch satellite tracking wildlife programme

A new project spearheaded by scientists from the Department of the Environment and the GONHS Raptor Unit will investigate the movements of Griffon Vultures migrating through the Straits of Gibraltar using lightweight GPS transmitters.

This has been launched to coincide with World Environment Day, which this year aims to connect people with nature.

Griffon Vultures are commonly observed in Gibraltar during the Spring. Their sheer size, as well as the uproar created by the resident Yellow-legged Gulls, has become one of the local highlights of the migration period. The project, known as Vulture track, aims to provide useful information on the wintering grounds of migrating Griffon Vultures in Africa as well as the movements and foraging patterns of the birds in their breeding grounds in Europe.

The first Vulture to be fitted with a solar-powered GPS tracker, known as Harry, was successfully released yesterday from the top of the Rock and it immediately continued with its onward journey North into Europe. It was also fitted with a unique wing-tag to help scientists identify the bird in the field. The Vulture had been brought down by resident gulls earlier during the week and was cared for by the experts at the GONHS Raptor Unit. Footage of the release can be viewed online (<https://youtu.be/yEFyPMZYwyl> ©A.Yome/GONHS).

Project members will now be closely analyzing the movements of the bird over the coming months and regular updates will be presented in the Department's Thinking Green website (<http://www.thinkinggreen.gov.gi>). In addition to providing valuable research information that can be used for conservation and environmental education, the project will also help raise awareness on the importance of protecting birds of prey, some of which are threatened in Europe.

This is the latest of several projects which are aimed to connect people with nature. They include the live underwater camera and the live swift nest cameras, all of which can also be accessed in the Thinking Green Website.

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In addition, tonight the Moorish Castle will be lit in green, to mark both World Environment Day and Gibraltar's commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.