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# First Record of Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps Rueppelli* Brehm, 1852) in Libya

Abdulnasser EISA<sup>1</sup>

Khaled ETAYEB<sup>1,2\*</sup>

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### Author affiliation

1. Libyan Society for Birds (LSB).

2. Zoology Departmen, Faculty of Science, the University of Tripoli.

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## ABSTRACT

In 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, during the sunset time in Shmaikh village 30 Km. south to Bani-Walid city (N 31°26,482 E 13°57,461), a sub-adult Rüppell's vulture *Gyps rueppelli* was found in the front yard of a house. This is the first record of *G. rueppelli* in Libya. Despite, the distribution range of this species is in the Sahel region and East Africa. Previously, there are only three vulture's species recorded in Libya; Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* and Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*. According to the IUCN-Red list, the Rüppell's vulture has mentioned as a critically endangered category D.

التسجيل الأول لنسر روبل (*Gyps rueppelli*, Brehm, 1852) في ليبيا

عبد الناصر عيسى<sup>1</sup> خالد التائب<sup>1,2\*</sup>

في الأول من أغسطس 2021، وعند وقت الغروب بقرية الشميخ التي تبعد 30 كم جنوب مدينة بني وليد (N 31°26,482 E 13°57,461)، تم العثور على نسر غير بالغ يسمى النسر الأبقع أو نسر روبل أو نسر مرقط *Gyps rueppelli* في الفناء الأمامي لأحد المنازل. وهذا يعتبر التسجيل الأول لهذا النوع في ليبيا، على الرغم من أن نطاق توزيع هذا النوع يمتد على منطقة الساحل الأفريقي من الشرق حتى الغرب. في السابق يوجد تسجيل لثلاثة أنواع فقط من النسور في ليبيا: الرحمة المصرية *Neophron percnopterus* والنسر الأسمر (نسر غريفون) *Gyps fulvus* والنسر الأذن (النسر النوبي) *Torgos tracheliotos*. وفقًا للقائمة الحمراء الصادرة عن الاتحاد الدولي لصون الطبيعة (IUCN-Red)، فإن النسر الأبقع قد ورد تسجيله على أنه مهدد بالانقراض بشكل حرج ومصنف من الفئة د (D).

## INTRODUCTION

Libya is considered one of the dry desert countries, despite its location on the southern coast of the Mediterranean, but the Mediterranean climate prevails only in the coastal areas. However, with the presence of mountainous ecosystems, whether coastal or desert, it gives them importance in attracting different species of raptors. Although, there is a lack of studies on the raptors, but there are valuable information about species and

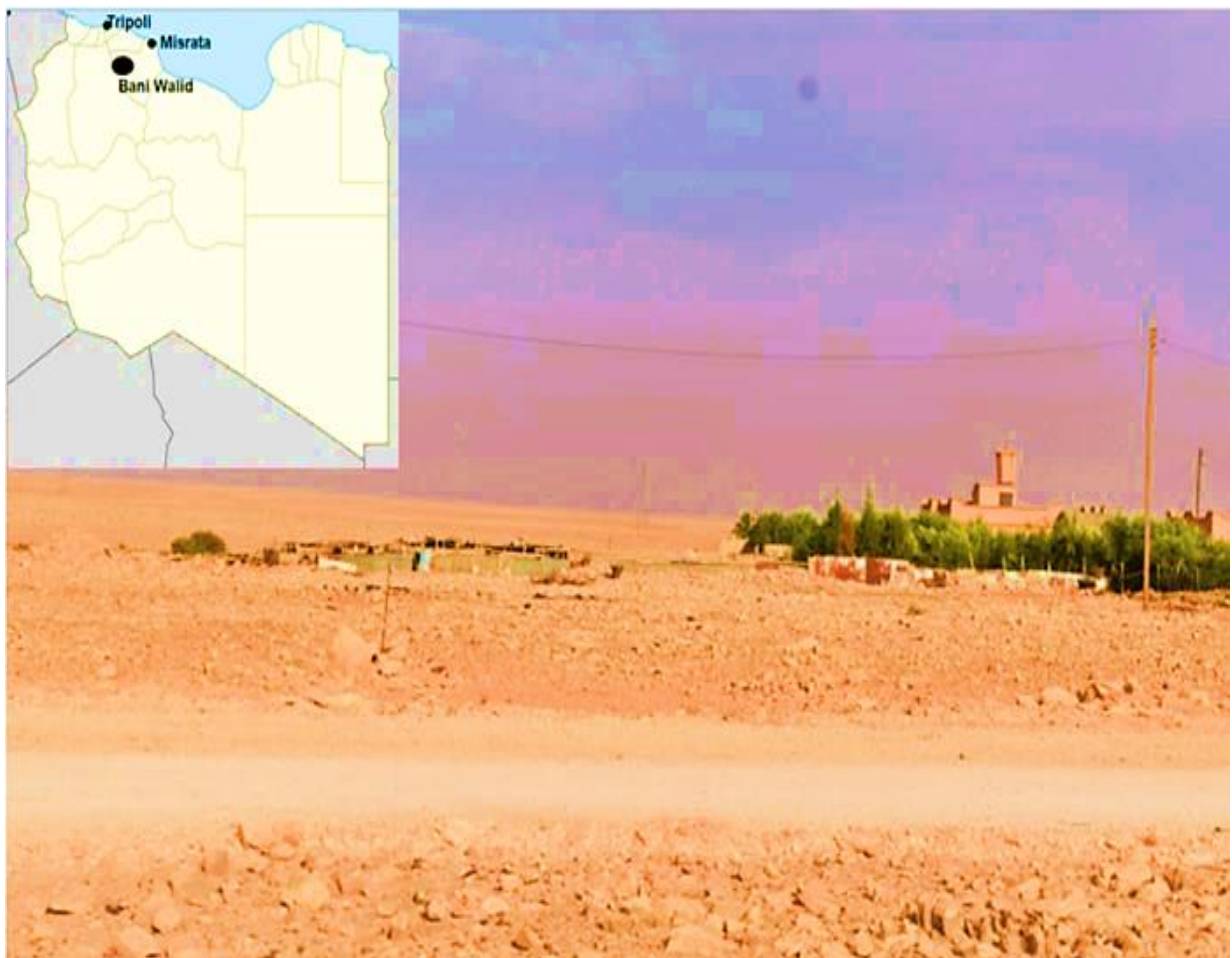
numbers in Libya. In the year 2016, the last book on Libyan birds was published (Isenmann, et. al., 2016), it included 351 species, and a total of 100 species were mentioned as nesting in Libya. The total of raptors species reached 36, three out of them are vultures: Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* and Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*. Alhrai (2014) mentioned a total of 34 raptor species in Libya with the same number of vultures species (three). This information is available since the issuing of the book of Birds of Libya (Tosci, 1969 translated by Alawami), and checklist of Libyan birds (Bundy, 1976).

Ornithologically, Libya is considered poor in comparing with its neighboring countries in the region (Smart *et. al.*, 2006).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A sub-adult Rüppell's vulture *Gyps rueppelli* was recorded for the first time in Libya, this record was in 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, during the sunset time in Shmaikh village 30 Km. south to Bani-Walid city (N 31°26,482 E 13°57,461) about 170 km. south east to Tripoli (Fig. 1). Although, the distribution range of this species is in the Sahel region and East Africa (Ferguson-Lees *et. al.*,

2001), however, the recording was for only one individual was found in the front yard of a house, the bird was very weak, unable to fully fly, and it was fed by the owner of this house. Some Photo-pictures were taken for this species with the surrounding environment mainly arid area. The recorded bird has a wing span of 216 cm, and 7.5 cm beak length. Moreover, the head does not have feathers, overall with a whitish-brown underbelly and thin. The neck base has a white collar, the eye is black. (Fig 2: a, b). Rüppell's vulture has most recently been assessed for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2022 as critically endangered category D (Garrido *et. al.*, 2021; IUCN.org.2022; Westrip *et. al.*, 2022).



**Fig. 1. Shmaikh village, where Rüppell's vulture was observed**



**Fig. 2:( a). Rüppell's vulture in front yard of a house. (b). The bird is a sub-adult with beak and black eyes**

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