Pastoralism & Vultures in the Balkans

Shared Challenges - Shared future

10-11 November 2026

Conference Centre "Panagiotis N. Soukakos" of the General State Archives - Historical Archive Museum of Epirus, Ioannina

10 November 2026

09:30 - 10:00 **Registration**

10:00 - 11:30 **Keynote Perspectives on Pastoralism and Biodiversity**

Opening & Welcome speeches

Pastoralism and vulture conservation
Stavros Xirouchakis - Natural History Museum of Crete / University of Crete

Overview of the current situation of Pastoralism in the Balkans
Engin Yilmaz - Yolda Initiative

How pastoralism contributes to healthy ecosystems
Pablo Manzano Baena - Basque Centre for Climate Change BC3

11:30 - 11:45 **Q & A**

11:45 - 12:15 **Coffee Break**

12:15 - 13:15 **Economic, Policy and Legal Challenges**

The protection of biodiversity in the Common Agricultural Policy: an achievement or a challenge?
Georgios Vlahos - Department of Agricultural Economics and Development, Agricultural University of Athens

Sustainable models to improve the economic performance of pastoral systems
Athanasios Ragkos - General Directorate of Agricultural Research, Hellenic Agricultural Organisation - DIMITRA

Traditional products and quality of pastoral products
Despoina Karatosidi - Research Institute of Animal Science, Hellenic Agricultural Organisation - DIMITRA

EU sanitary regulations affecting pastoralism & vultures
Jovan Andevski - Vulture Conservation Foundation

13:15 - 13:45 **Q & A**

13:45 - 14:45 **Lunch Break**

14:45 - 15:45 **Environmental Challenges and Emerging Opportunities**

Pastoralism: can we preserve it as a (productive) tool for nature conservation in the Balkans?
Ioannis Kazoglou - Laboratory of Rangeland Science and Protected Area Management, University of Thessaly & General Secretary of the Association of Breeders of the Greek Short-horned Cattle Breed

Traditional Livestock Farming: A Natural Ally for Sustainable Parasite Control
Aggeliki Liakata - Veterinary Research Institute, Hellenic Agricultural Organisation-DIMITRA

Local knowledge and practices for sustainable management of pastoral resources
Giorgos Ziagkas - Transhumant livestock breeder, Animal Technician & Veterinarian

Growing international recognition of pastoralism and its role in biodiversity conservation: IYRP2026 and CMS COP15
Engin Yilmaz - Yolda Initiative

15:45 - 16:00 **Q & A**

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Opening & Welcome speeches

Vulture populations in Greece and the Balkans
Apostolis Kaltsis- Hellenic Ornithological Society

Wildlife poisoning: leading vultures to extinction
Victoria Saravia Mullin - Hellenic Ornithological Society

Pastoralism and large carnivores: striving towards coexistence
Yorgos Iliopoulos - Callisto Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society

Bringing vultures back to Epirus: why we need traditional livestock breeding more than ever
Sylvia Zakkak - Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency

11:15 - 11:30 **Q & A**

11:30 - 12:00 **Coffee Break**

12:00 - 13:15 **Learning from Regional and International Experiences**

Vultures and transhumance: experiences from Europe to South America
Eneko Arrondo Floristan - University of Granada

Pastoralism and vultures in Bulgaria
Hristo Peshev - Fund for Wild Flora and Fauna

How extensive livestock helped save the Bearded vulture in Crete
Stavros Xirouchakis - Natural History Museum of Crete / University of Crete

Shepherding school: teaching and keeping alive pastoral skills in Andalucia
Veronica Cruz Moriana - School of shepherds, Regional Government of Andalusia

Butterfly biodiversity: indicator of the importance of traditional grazing
Vassiliki Kati - Biodiversity Conservation Lab, University of Ioannina

13:15 - 13:30 **Q & A**

13:30 - 14:30 **Lunch Break**

14:30 - 15:45 **Round Table: Shared Challenges and Common Solutions for pastoralism and wildlife**
Moderator: *Thanasis Ragkos*
Panelists: *Engin Yilmaz, Jovan Andevski, Georgios Vlahos, Despoina Karatosidi, Giorgos Ziagkas*

15:45 - 16:00 Summary on key insights from sessions and roundtable

12 November 2026

08:30- 17:30 **Field trip** (Limited places available)