

breeding cycles that typically breed in protected cavities of cliffs, a trait presumably favored because it provided security against adverse weather.

The Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is a medium-sized scavenger living mainly in open landscapes of arid and rugged regions of Eurasia and Africa. Although strongly migratory, this species also includes sedentary populations on several archipelagos such as the Balearic Islands, Cape Verde, Canary Islands, and Socotra. Breeding takes place in cavities or caves of cliffs of variable height and nests are usually reused year after year. Occasionally, alternative sites are occupied within the same territory (Cramp and Simmons 1980, *The birds of the western Palearctic*, Vol. 2, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, U.K.).

Egyptian Vultures have been extensively studied in Spain since the late 1970s. More than 1000 breeding attempts have been monitored. Most of them were in inaccessible nesting places, with only a few (<5%) in caves with easy access to large mammals, including humans. No nest was located directly on the ground (Donázar and Ceballos 1988, *Ardeola* 35:3–14). In this paper, we describe the first recorded case of ground nesting in Canarian Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus majorensis*).

Fuerteventura (1662 km<sup>2</sup>) is the most eastern island of the Canary archipelago. It is relatively flat with a dry climate (<100 mm rain annually; Donázar et al. 2002, *J. Raptor Res.* 36:17–23). The island harbors the last population of an endangered endemic subspecies of the Egyptian Vulture, with no more than 130 individuals and 25 breeding pairs (Donázar et al. 2002, *Biol. Conserv.* 107:89–97).

Twenty, 23, 21, 25, and 27 breeding territories have been monitored in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002, respectively. On 29 March 2002, we visited the breeding territory of one of these pairs, which had bred successfully in a cave on a hillside between 1998–2001. The old nest, easily accessible by foot, was unoccupied, but ca. 600 m away, we discovered an adult Egyptian Vulture incubating an egg on the ground. The new nest site was placed on a flat and exposed surface, with scattered shrubs (*Launaea arborescens*). On 13 July 2002, we visited the nest to mark and measure the chick, which fledged successfully at the beginning of August. In 2003, the pair moved back to the cave it used in previous years and bred successfully there.

Nesting in accessible caves is common for this species in Fuerteventura (in 2002, 41% of the nest sites were accessible by foot,  $N = 27$ ), although inaccessible sites are not a limiting factor on the island (pers. observ.). Terrestrial predators were not existent on the island until the human colonization, 2500 yr ago. Currently, the only carnivores present are feral dogs and cats, in very low numbers. In addition, the dry climate may favor open nesting. Furthermore, human density has been always extremely low (1000–3000 habitants before the European colonization; Cabrera 1996, *La prehistoria de Fuerteventura: un modelo insular de adaptación*, Servicio de Publicaciones del Cabildo Insular de Fuerteventura, Puerto del Rosario, Islas Canarias). However, during the last several decades the human population in the island has increased sharply (11 668 in 1900, 69 260 in 2000; Anonymous 2001, *Anuario estadístico de Fuerteventura*, Cabildo Insular de Fuerteventura, Puerto del Rosario, Islas Canarias), around a million tourists visit the island every year, and the number of pets has presumably increased too. These factors may lead to the loss of a number of nesting territories accessible to potential predators and, consequently, have a negative affect on this endangered population.

We thank Cabildo de Fuerteventura and the Projects REN 2000-1556 GLO and CGL 2004-00270 for having funded this research. We also thank José A. Donázar, Jordi Figuerola, M. Di Vittorio, and an anonymous referee for reviewing early drafts of this letter.—**Laura Gangoso** (e-mail address: [laurag@ebd.csic.es](mailto:laurag@ebd.csic.es)) and **César-Javier Palacios**, Department of Applied Biology, Estación Biológica de Doñana, C.S.I.C., Avda. M<sup>a</sup> Luisa s/n 41013 Sevilla, Spain.

Received 30 July 2004; accepted 26 March 2005

Associate Editor: Fabrizio Sergio

*J. Raptor Res.* 39(2):187–188

© 2005 The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.

## FIRST SUMMER RECORDS OF OSPREYS (*PANDION HALIAETUS*) ALONG THE COAST OF OAXACA, MEXICO

Between October 2000 and September 2001, we conducted 10 trips by sea, once during almost every month, to survey Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) in Oaxaca, Mexico. Ospreys breed in temperate North America and along the coast of the Gulf of California (Henny and Anderson 1979, *Bull. So. Calif. Acad. Sci.*, 78:89–106; Judge 1983, *Wilson*

*Bull.* 95:243–255), but generally only winter in southern Mexico (Henny 1988, Pages 73–101 in R. Palmer [Ed.], Handbook of North American birds, Vol. 4. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, CT U.S.A.), including Oaxaca. We surveyed islands and adjacent coasts between 0848–1614 H, from Zipolite Beach (96°29'W, 15°40'N), near Puerto Angel, to Huatulco Bay (96°05'W, 15°48'N). Total surveyed area was ca. 2.5 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Pacific coast of Oaxaca is characterized by rocky beaches interspersed among extensive sandy portions of coastline. The adjacent mainland is almost exclusively deciduous forest. Small islands and rocky formations are concentrated throughout Huatulco Bay, where Ospreys are a moderately common wintering species.

During surveys we observed 13 Ospreys in October, 12 in November, 11 in January, six in February, nine in March, two during both May and June, three in July, two in August, and finally, one individual in September. Because of the blackish patch in their crowns and above their necks, we assumed that our observations corresponded to *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*, which winters in low densities in Oaxaca (Poole 1989, Ospreys, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA U.S.A.).

During summer months there were two previous June records of Ospreys in southeastern Mexico: one record involved three birds in central Oaxaca, far from the coast (Binford 1989. A distributional survey of the birds of the Mexican state of Oaxaca. The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, DC U.S.A.), and a second record noted a few individuals on the Bay of Zihuatanejo, Guerrero (Erickson and Hamilton 1993, *Euphonia* 2:81–91). Our work now provides new summer records of nonbreeding Osprey for southern Mexico: two individuals from both May and August, and at least three individuals in July. It is possible that Ospreys we observed during these summer months were immature individuals that spend at least 16 continuous months in the tropics before returning to northern breeding areas (Henny 1988).

We appreciate the improvements in English usage made by Kerri Vierling through the Association of Field Ornithologists' program of editorial assistance.—**Juan Meraz (e-mail address: sula@angel.umar.mx), Instituto de Recursos, Universidad del Mar, Puerto Angel, Oaxaca, C.P. 70902 Mexico; Betzabeth González-Bravo, Biología Marina, Universidad del Mar, Puerto Angel, Oaxaca, C.P. 70902, Mexico.**

Received 10 May 2004; accepted 8 March 2005

Associate Editor: James R. Belthoff