



Halting the decline of vultures in West & Central Africa

Activity report – Semester 1, 2026



Information on the document

This report summarises the main achievements of Sahara Conservation's vulture programme, implemented in collaboration with local stakeholders in Niger and Chad during the first six months of 2026. The main areas of implementation in Niger are the Gadabeji Biosphere Reserve (GBR), the Termit massif within the Termit & Tin-Toumma National Natural Reserve (TTNNR) and the Koutous massif, and the Ouadi Rimé – Ouadi Achim Faunal Reserve (OROAFR) in Chad.

Within this conservation program, activities are organized around two main objectives:

- (1) Monitor and improve our knowledge on vulture populations in Chad and Niger.
- (2) Protect the remaining vulture populations by addressing the main threats they face.

Table of contents

What we aim to accomplish.....	2
The challenges.....	2
Our impact	2
What we achieved	3
Vultures in focus.....	4
Improving understanding to inform action.....	4
Map of seasonal variation of tagged vultures' spatial distribution	5
Beyond the birds.....	6
We encourage knowledge, interest and collaboration	5
They make it possible on the ground	7
Thank you.....	8

Report prepared by: Cloé Pourchier & Violeta Barrios

Date: July 2026

Cover picture: Lappet-faced vulture in its nest, one of the 15 active nests recorded in the Termit–Tin Toumma National Nature Reserve, Niger.

© Abdoul Razakou Abdou Mahamadou / Sahara Conservation. Date: January 2025

What we aim to accomplish

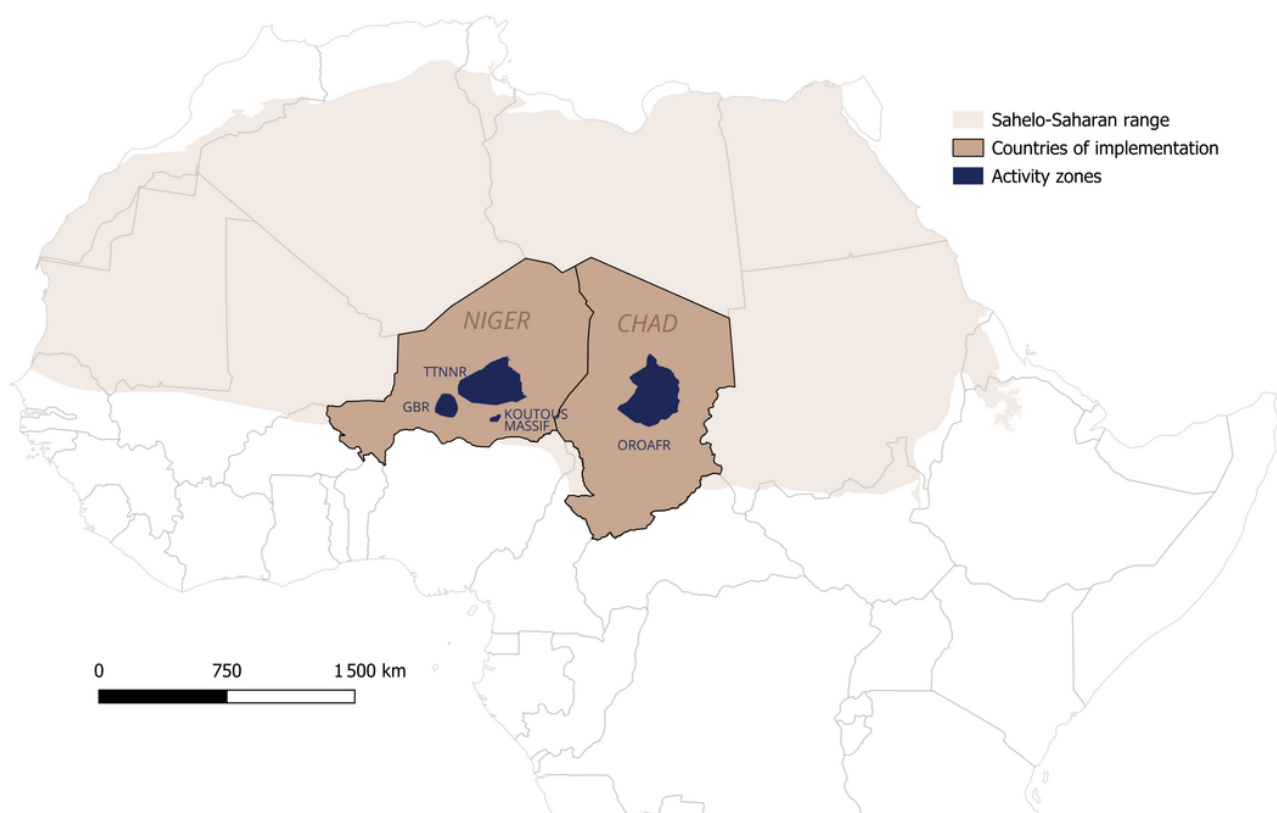
The challenges

As scavengers, vultures play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Yet, they are among the species most threatened with extinction. Throughout Africa, vultures have declined drastically over the last decades, with the highest rates of decline in West Africa. One of the major drivers for this decline is poisoning and illegal capture and killing of vultures for belief-based use.

Our impact

Sahara Conservation and its partners have initiated a dedicated conservation program on uniquely placed vulture populations in Chad and Niger. The primary objective is to improve understanding of these vulture populations while strengthening local capacity to address the threats they face.

The success of our actions depends on strong partnerships and the implementation of complementary activities involving key stakeholders. These include raising awareness among local communities about the consequences of vulture decline, engaging traditional healers to address the demand side of wildlife trafficking, collaborating with community leaders to drive meaningful change, working with authorities to disrupt supply chains, and conducting systematic monitoring to fill knowledge gaps on vulture populations and threats—ultimately informing effective conservation actions.



What we achieved

43 vulture nests closely monitored in Niger and Chad, with a minimum breeding success rate exceeding 50%

101,319 km traveled and monitored by satellite transmitters in Chad over the period

1,172 community members and stakeholders, including hunters and traditional healers, engaged in awareness raising activities on vultures in Niger

504 pupils in key vulture areas of rural Niger received school supplies and environmental awareness education

10 women from local communities received direct support to strengthen their livelihoods in key vulture areas in rural Niger

1 case of illegal capture of an Egyptian vulture chick intercepted in Niger, and handed over to the relevant authorities

1 presentation and **1** poster sharing our work and approach at the international meeting of the Sahel & Sahara Interest Group

News about our vulture program reached about **25,000** people on social media

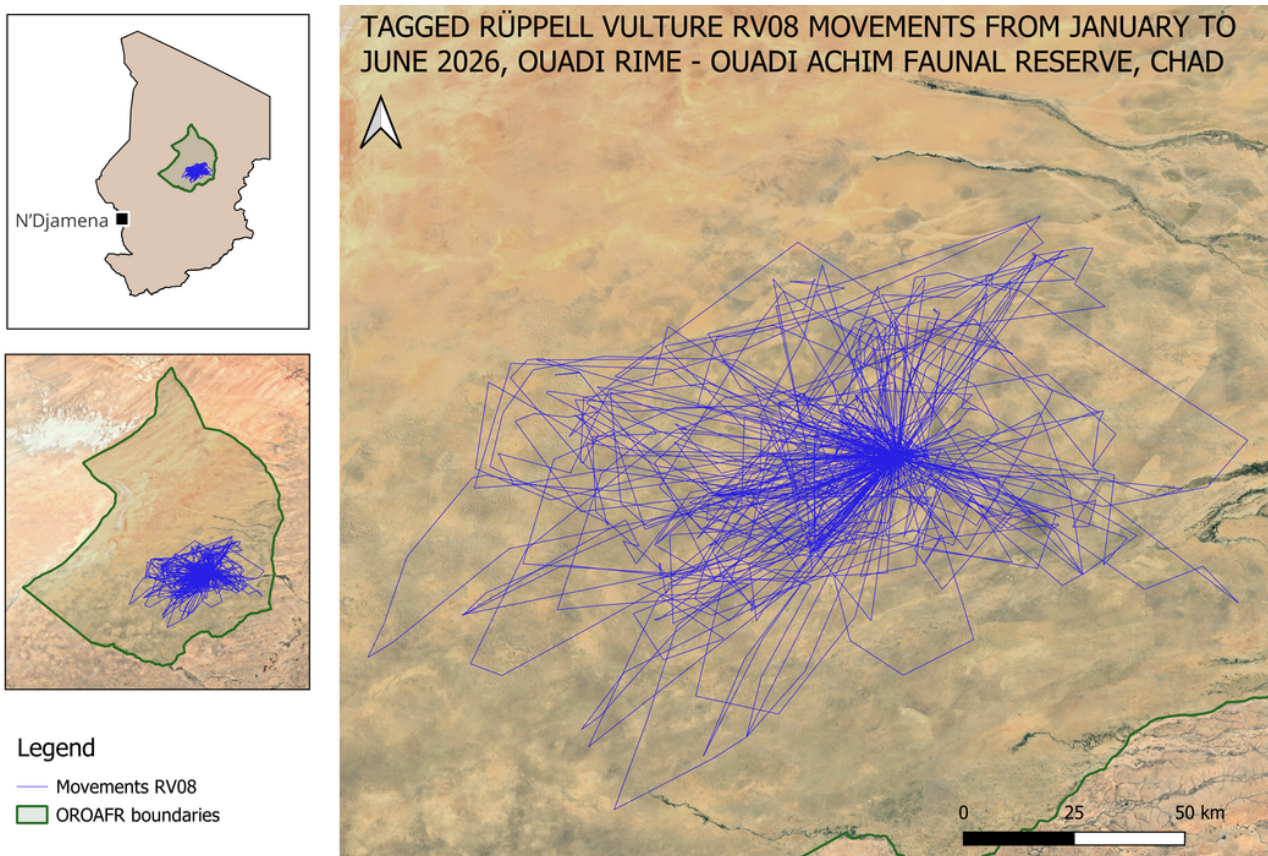
Increased visibility of our vulture conservation work through **2** Mongabay articles highlighting key program activities and achievements on threats to vultures

Picture: Rüppell's vulture nests monitored in the OROAFR surveyed using a drone; among nine active nests identified, four successfully produced a chick, including two breeding pairs with tagged birds. © Ali Mahamat / Sahara Conservation. Date: January 2025

Vultures in focus

Improving understanding to inform action

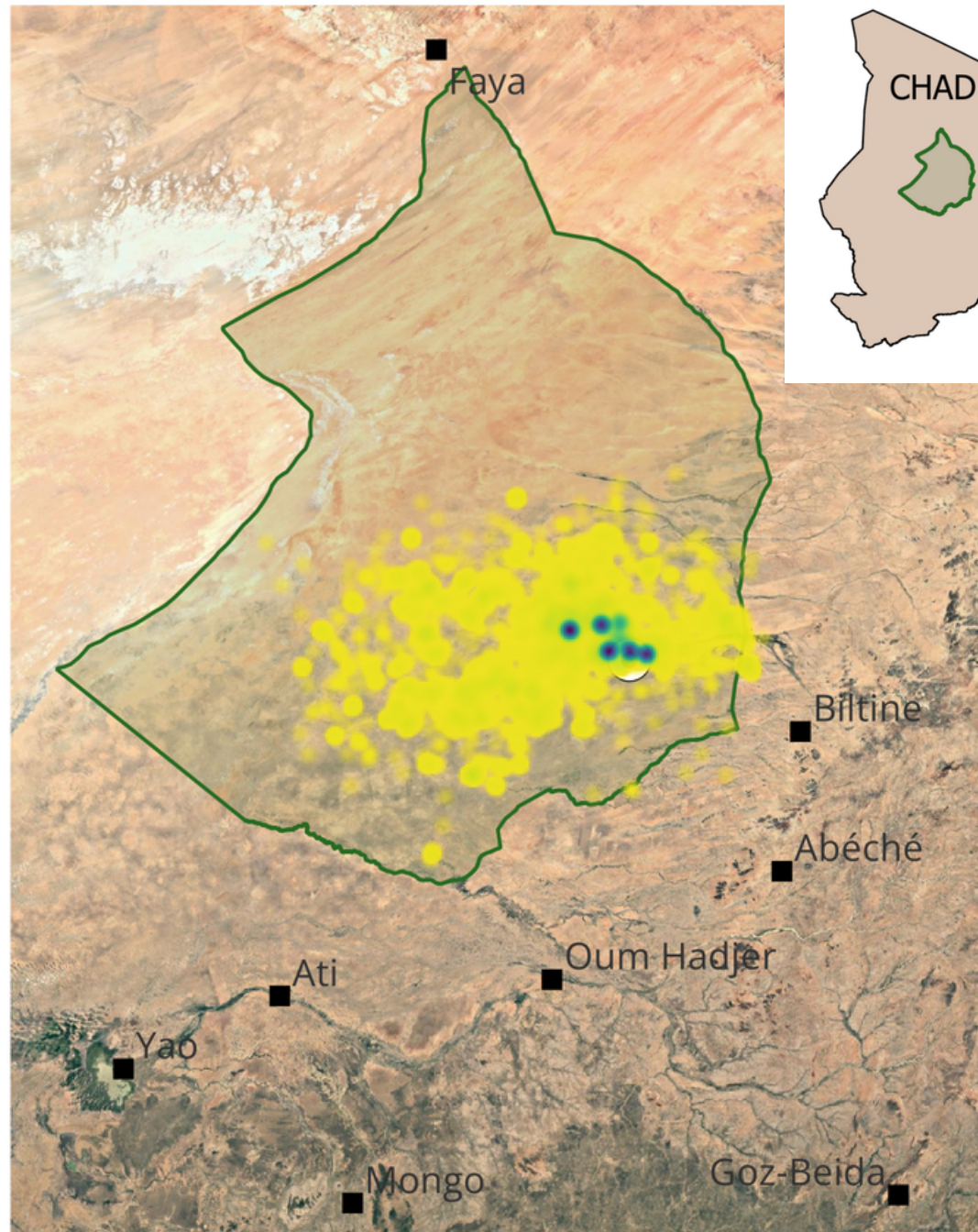
- **Updated data on breeding populations of three vulture species** in Niger and Chad: Lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*), Rüppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*), and Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), showing improved breeding success compared to the previous year, particularly among tree-nesting individuals, and revealing asynchronous breeding patterns within populations. Tagged breeding vultures in the OROAFR provided key insights into breeding behaviour, enabling the identification of nest locations and tracking of nest visit patterns (cf. map of RV08 movements below), complementing ground observations.



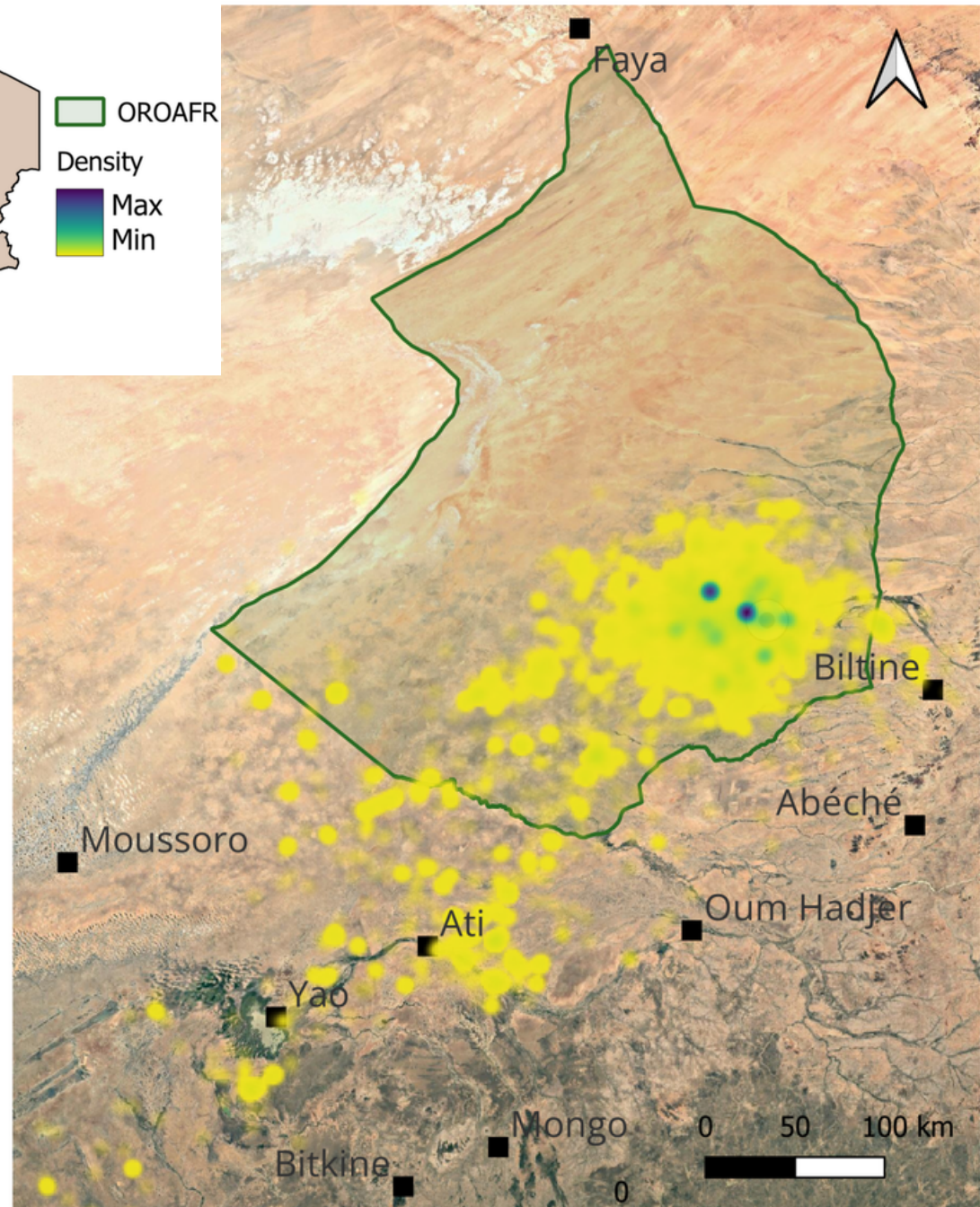
- **Seasonal movements were observed** among the five tagged individuals as vultures largely remained within the reserve during the cold dry season (November–February), coinciding with the start of the breeding period, while significant movements south of the OROAFR were made during the hot dry season (March–June) (cf. map next page).
- **Confirmed persistence of significant threats to vultures**, underscoring the need to pursue and reinforce conservation actions, with multiple incidents documented, including two cases of Egyptian vulture chicks removed from nests in Niger, the death of a tagged breeding Rüppell's vulture at its nest resulting in chick mortality (cause undetermined), the loss of nesting trees potentially affecting breeding, and the discovery of two intact Hooded vulture carcasses in the possession of a hunter in Niger, providing further evidence of ongoing exploitation and pressure on vulture populations.

SEASONAL VARIATION OF TAGGED VULTURES SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

NOVEMBER 2025 TO JUNE 2026, OUADI RIMÉ - OUADI ACHIM FAUNAL RESERVE, CHAD



TAGGED VULTURES SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION FROM NOVEMBER 2025 TO FEBRUARY 2026 (COLD DRY SEASON)



TAGGED VULTURES SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION FROM MARCH TO JUNE 2026 (HOT DRY SEASON)



Picture: Pied crows and Egyptian vultures (two adults and one juvenile) at a waterhole in the Koutous Massif, Niger, where they regularly congregate. Migratory individuals are also present from September to late February.

© Abdoul Razack Moussa Zabeirou/ Sahara Conservation. Date: January 2026

Beyond the birds

We encourage knowledge, interest and collaboration

- **Strengthened the role of customary and administrative authorities in Niger** through two dedicated workshops totalizing 100 participants in the Koutous Massif, enhancing their role and capacity to integrate vulture conservation into local decision-making and to respond more effectively to poisoning and poaching incidents.
- **Continued awareness-raising efforts** highlighted strong concern among local populations regarding the decline of vultures, despite limited understanding of its causes, underscoring the need to further intensify sensitization efforts to ensure communities are better informed and able to contribute to vulture protection.
- **Participation in the SSIG meeting** in Egypt offered an opportunity to share experiences with fellow conservationists, increase our program visibility and strengthen collaboration with partners.
- **Joined an international consortium supporting the recovery of the migratory endangered Egyptian vulture** in the Balkans, contributing to a cross-continental conservation initiative through a five-year LIFE-funded project.



Picture: Gathering of traditional chiefs from 94 villages from the Koutous in Niger, highlighting the key role of customary authorities in community engagement and therefore conservation efforts.

© Abba Mamane / Sahara Conservation. Date: June 2026.

They make it possible on the ground

Abdoul Razack Moussa Zabeirou – Sahara Conservation Country representative in Niger, coordinates field activities in the country.

Abdoul Razakou Abdou Mahamadou – Project assistant, in charge of vulture monitoring in Niger and sensitization work.

Abba Mamane – Field officer in the Koutous massif in Niger, leads sensitization campaigns in the region and supports vulture monitoring.

The **monitoring team in the OROAFR**, with a special mention to **Mahamat Ali** who coordinates most of the vulture work in Chad.

With the support of Marc Dethier – Oryx Project manager, coordinating logistics and enabling work in OROAFR and **Tim Wachter** – Senior Biologist, Zoological Society of London, contributing to field work and analysis in OROAFR.

The support teams in Niger and Chad are assisting with accounting, administration and logistics for field missions.

The coordinating team (Cloé Pourchier and Violeta Barrios) provided crucial assistance on coordinating the activities, the administrative, financial and reporting side of the operations, as well as in fundraising.

Thank you to **all the other team members** for their timely participation and support, and to the **authorities and communities** who help make this initiative a success.



Picture: Field team in Niger observing Egyptian vulture nests located near villages in the Koutous Massif, using the opportunity to engage local communities and give children a firsthand view of the nest through a spotting scope.

©Abdoul Razack Moussa Zabeirou / Sahara Conservation.
Date: January 2026

Thank you

Technical support and funding from your organization helps to achieve the overall goal of preserving African vulture species in the wild. By preserving vultures, we highly contribute to healthier ecosystems. It contributes to support Sahara Conservation's vision of a Sahara where ecological processes function naturally; a Sahara that benefits all its inhabitants and where support for its conservation comes from stakeholders across all sectors of society.



Together we make a difference