

An aerial photograph of a rocky coastline. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, transitioning to a lighter, sandy beach area. The rocks are large and reddish-brown, with some smaller stones scattered along the shore. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a healthy marine environment.

GVI WILDLIFE CONSERVATION VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PROJECT BRIEF

Your project will be to collect and produce data from camera trap footage for the [Endangered Wildlife Trust's \(EWT\) Hooded Vulture Project](#).

About your project

Camera traps have revolutionized wildlife research and conservation, enabling scientists to collect photographic evidence of species in the wild with little expense, relative ease, and minimal disturbance to wildlife. They have become a crucial element of wildlife monitoring, adding significant value to work conducted by researchers and conservationists alike. Their non-invasive format has also allowed for the observation of events, behaviours or associations not easily or often witnessed in person. This is especially true for elusive and endangered species, such as vultures, who prefer to nest high in trees.

African vultures have declined drastically over the last 30 years to the level where five species are currently listed as Critically Endangered. Camera trap footage from Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) nests was collected during the breeding seasons of 2016-2018 by the EWT Hooded Vulture research team in Limpopo, South Africa, capturing 418,596 photos from 13 different nests.

Previously published articles related to this project include different predators at the nests, and whether the birds visit their nests year-round or not. Further analysing these images would be incredibly valuable to the EWT's Coordinator of Vulture Conservation and Research, as there have currently been no studies related to Hooded Vulture activity budgets.

Processing these photos will provide interns with a fantastic opportunity to really gain a unique insight into the behaviour of these magnificent creatures, as well as experience first-hand the often tedious yet rewarding work of a field researcher.

Deliverables

Your project will be to collect data from an allocated number of camera trap photos provided by the EWT Hooded Vulture Project. Interns will need to find and download an open-source camera trapping software to assist, as metadata (e.g. file names, temperature, file size, date, and time) needs to be



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extracted and uploaded into a spreadsheet, which will include recordings of the following observations for each sighting:

- How many vultures can be seen at the nest?
- What behaviour can be observed at the nest (ethogram provided)?
- What colour is the face of the vulture on the nest?
- Any additional notes or information required (provided in the spreadsheet template).
- Hooded Vultures faces flush pink at certain times, and this project may give insight as to whether this is related to ambient temperature or to social cues (e.g. if the mate arrives) or neither.

For each assigned set of photos, a word document will also need to be created and include any additional information or sightings of interest, so the EWT's Project Coordinator can easily access the footage.

Reflections deliverable:

As you work through this exercise, make sure to take note of the parts of this task that you enjoy and the parts you might not, so you can talk this through in your marine project review later in your program.

What does success look like?

By the end of this project, we hope you:

- provide the EWT's Hooded Vulture Project with accurate, statistically significant data to assist in their conservation efforts via a comprehensive spreadsheet and additional word document if necessary.
- can utilize ethograms and recognize different behaviours and/or activities in observational studies of species.
- understand how to operate camera trapping software and how it can assist in data collection and analysis.

SDG focus areas

This project will work towards the following SDGs:

- Goal 15: [Life on Land](#)
- Goal 17: [Partnerships](#)



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