

<b>Example of good practice</b>	<b>Cooperation with the electric company to improve protection of the saker falcon in Vojvodina</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Wild species; management</b>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Društvo za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica Srbije (DZPPS) – Serbian Society for the Protection and Study of Birds</b>
<b>Partners</b>	<b>Elektromreža Srbije (EMS) – Serbian Electric company</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Vojvodina</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
<b>Form of protection</b>	None
Scope of implementation (local, national)	Regional
<b>Time</b>	<b>Cooperation with the electric company – 3 months 2 years – until the first saker falcons inhabited the nest</b>
<b>People</b>	<b>0, volunteer</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>7 000€</b>
Funding	Rufford Foundation; Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Serbia
Project info	<a href="http://www.rufford.org/projects/drazenko_rajkovic">www.rufford.org/projects/drazenko_rajkovic</a>
Contact	Draženko Rajković; Uroš Pantović
<b>Achievements</b>	First cooperation between an NGO for bird production and the Serbian national electric company. Raising public awareness about the critically endangered species, the saker falcon. 30 safe nests installed 30 volunteers from Vojvodina participating Finding a compromise between pigeon breeding and falcon societies, delaying pigeon competitions or changing locations during the falcon nesting season.

<b>Problem/opportunity</b>	
<b>Problem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Critically endangered bird species at the global level</b></li> <li>● <b>Inadequate nesting sites, on power line poles</b></li> <li>● <b>Habitat erosion</b></li> <li>● <b>Electrocution</b></li> <li>● <b>Lack of knowledge about the state of the nesting population</b></li> <li>● <b>Poisoning of falcons</b></li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Cooperation with the electric company</b></li> <li>● <b>Monitoring the population of the saker falcon</b></li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	
<b>Initial idea</b>	<p>The population of the saker falcon in Vojvodina does not have sufficient nesting areas (in trees) of crows and ravens, whose nests it uses, so it nests on power line poles where there is unfortunately a high risk of electrocution. DZPPS was the initiator of the idea to build safe nests and install them on power longline structures, using the example of good practice from Hungary. These structures fulfil three conditions: they are immediately available, they protect birds from inclement weather conditions, and protect the box from falling, as they are firmly affixed to the structure. These structures are used throughout Europe and Asia and are the most efficient technical protection measure for this species.</p>
<b>Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The idea arose reactively, as initial studies indicated a loss of part of the saker falcon population having known nesting sites in Vojvodina.</li> <li>● A catalogue of pigeon breeders in the territory of Vojvodina was made, and it overlapped with the former map of the saker falcon distribution, which previously had 40 pairs. With a higher concentration of pigeon</li> </ul>

	breeders in a given area of Vojvodina, the completely absence of the saker falcon was observed.
<b>Partner roles</b>	<p>The Serbian electric company (EMS) enabled the installation of safe nests on power longline structures in Vojvodina. EMS provided workers, cranes and equipment for their installation.</p> <p>Partners were included prior to writing the project.</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	
<b>Project key stages</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obtaining financing</li> <li>2. Cooperation with the electric company</li> <li>3. Population census</li> <li>4. Building the nests</li> <li>5. Installing the nests</li> <li>6. Monitoring the use of safe nests</li> <li>7. Workshop with pigeon breeders</li> </ol>
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiated the meeting/cooperation with EMS. Presenting the project activities.</li> <li>● Obtaining a work permit from the Provincial Institute for Nature Protection.</li> <li>● Establishment of partnership and the role of the electric company. Cooperation agreement signed for the project to protect the saker falcon in Serbia.</li> <li>● Complete population census, with the participation of some 30 volunteers (members of DZPSS).</li> <li>● Building the safe nests/boxes in the most threatened active nests on power line poles and in former nesting territories (census data from 10 years earlier).</li> <li>● Installing the nests in cooperation with EMS in several phases.</li> <li>● 10-12 installation tours, each with 2-3 nests. It is necessary to work in stages as the power on the longlines needs to be completely turned off</li> </ul>

	<p>throughout the area, causing blackouts for a large population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Public discussions with interested parties (pigeon breeding associations, falcon breeders) suffering direct damages from the saker falcon and other predators, and the inspection services.</b></li> <li>● <b>Offering a solution to the conflict (delaying pigeon competitions or moving their locations during falcon nesting periods).</b></li> <li>● <b>Cooperation with the Birdlife partner MME in Hungary to ring young saker falcons for satellite telemetry tracking.</b></li> <li>● <b>Drafting promotional and educational materials</b></li> </ul>
Stakeholders selection	Local stakeholders were DZPPS volunteers who accepted the invitation to take part and interested parties who participated in the public debate.
Stakeholder involvement	DZPPS volunteers from the Vojvodina region participated in project implementation in their local communities near the powerline structures. About 30 people took part.
Rights to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organization of target workshops and individual calls to all pigeon and falcon associations in the region, as they suffer direct damages from the saker falcon and other predators.</li> <li>● The objective was to raise awareness of the role and importance of the saker falcon, and to offer a solution to the conflict (postponing pigeon competitions or moving their location during the falcon nesting season).</li> </ul>
Communication	<p>The media were present during installation of nests.</p> <p>Education was conducted throughout Serbia in primary and secondary schools, and at universities (Faculty of Science).</p> <p>Regular posts on social networks and in the media, to attract new members and possible volunteers.</p>

Climate change adaptation & mitigation	Future recommendations include planting a windbreak and natural forests. This will help to prevent destruction of the salt flats and steppe as the natural falcon habitat.
Challenges	Financial: Continued monitoring of the saker falcon population and creating a larger project for its protection.
	Technical: all technical issues were resolved through cooperation with the electrical company
	With stakeholders: Cooperation with pigeon and falcon breeders was not easy.
<b>Changes</b>	
<b>Positive effects on environment</b>	<b>Only 1 pair of saker falcons took up nesting in the 30 installed safe nests, the others were inhabited by the Eurasian hobby, kestrel, buzzard and raven.</b> Construction of safe nests for the saker falcon and other birds, in order to reduce the risks of their electrocution.
<b>Positive economic and social changes</b>	<b>Public sector (local, national)</b> <b>Social: the project was followed regularly by the regional media, and the scientific and general public were informed of the issues to protect a critically endangered bird species (about its habitat, electrocution, number of individuals) in Serbia.</b> <b>Strong support from the Provincial Institute for Nature Protection.</b>
	<b>Private sector</b> <b>Economic: reduced damages to the electricity network due to the electrocution of birds</b> <b>Social: First cooperation in Serbia between an NGO for the protection of birds and the national electric company.</b> <b>Creation of a positive image for EMS through its active contribution to protect a critically endangered species.</b> <b>Potential created for future cooperation and possible financing of conservation work.</b>
	<b>Local population:</b>

	<p><b>Social:</b> Local volunteers included in the work, from the ages of 18 to 60 years.</p>
	<p><b>Scientific community:</b>  <b>Social:</b> Census of the saker falcon population. Number of nesting pairs (16–21) of saker falcons and the list of all nests of ravens and grey crows which are potential nests for the saker falcon (which takes over their nests as it does not build its own).</p>
<p><b>Replication and recommendations</b></p>	
<p><b>Key benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Willingness for cooperation from the electric company</li> <li>● Strong show of support from volunteers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>We would take a more serious approach to this project in the sense of seeking additional funding.</b></li> <li>● <b>Inclusion of the general public through campaigns.</b></li> <li>● <b>Adopt a saker falcon nest, as a possible communication message.</b></li> <li>● <b>Public discussions on the importance of the saker falcon for the region and country, as the only critically endangered bird of prey.</b></li> <li>● <b>Greater pressures on institutions to participate in the project and to give a greater contribution in terms of specific protection measures.</b></li> <li>● <b>Signing of a Raptors memorandum of cooperation.</b></li> <li>● <b>Stronger controls over illegal changes to changes in land use.</b></li> <li>● <b>Stronger inspection controls over the illegal tilling of the salt flats and steppe in Vojvodina.</b></li> <li>● <b>Supervision over the illegal activities of pigeon breeders.</b></li> <li>● <b>Stronger control over the distribution and use of prohibited pesticides (farmers) and by pigeon breeders (who rub furadan, lanatan and krezan onto the neck of the pigeon where it cannot reach,</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>thereby killing the saker falcon and other predators).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Nature conservation should be the responsibility of various institutions.</b></li> </ul>
Sustainability	<p>Ongoing communications with all those involved.</p> <p>People are the key, without them there is no sustainability.</p> <p>Volunteers were an important aspect in project implementation.</p>
Your interests	<p>Example of resolving conflicts with sides in dispute – pigeon breeding association.</p> <p>Examples of inclusion of socially threatened groups and minorities as volunteers.</p> <p>Co-financing for LIFE.</p>
<b>Expectations</b>	
From WWF?	<p>Assistance in lobbying the relevant institutions to improve the status of the saker falcon and to implement active protection.</p> <p>Co-financing and partnership.</p>