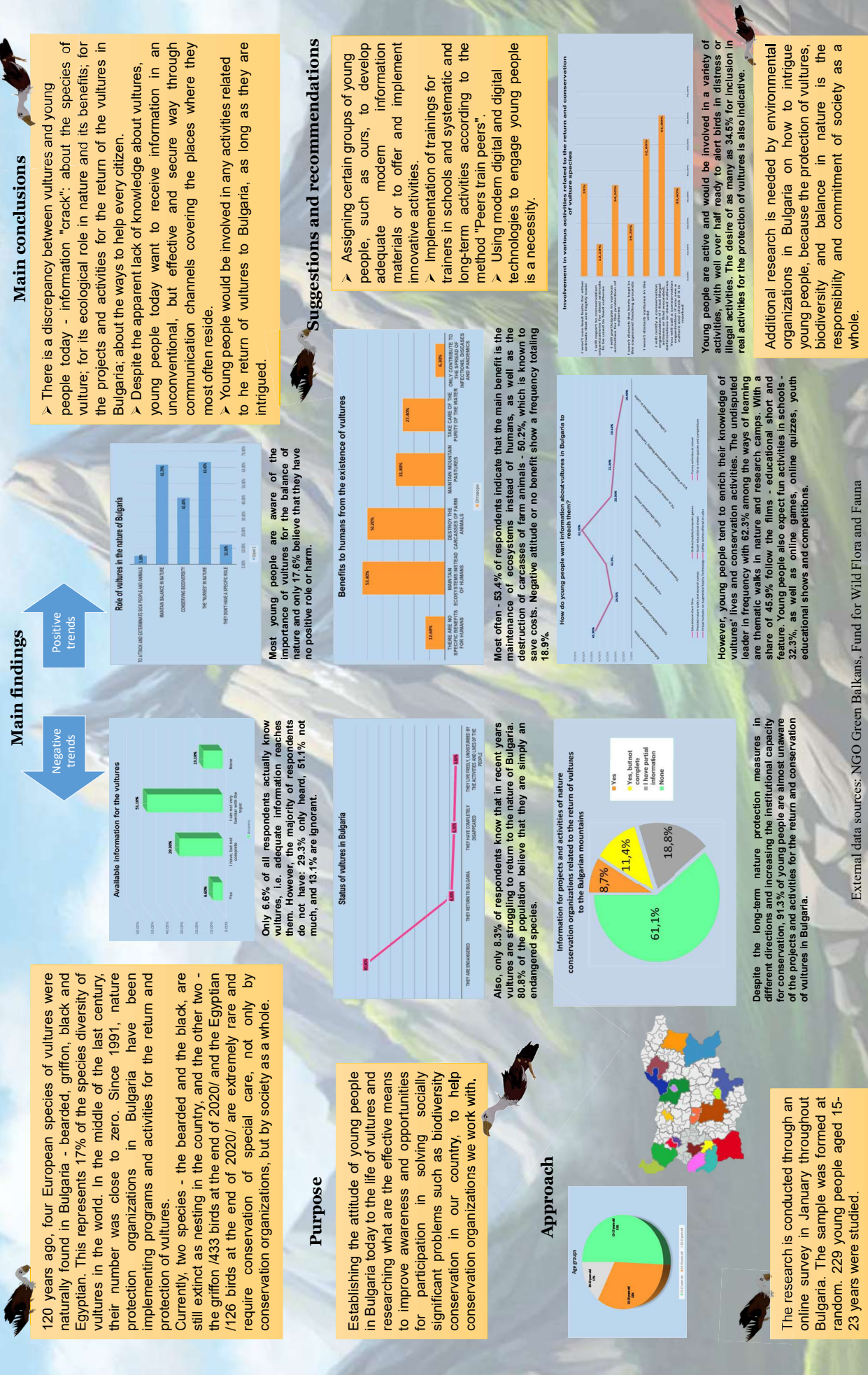


VULTURES AND YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

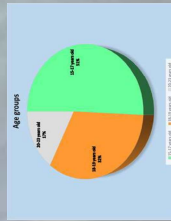


120 years ago, four European species of vultures were naturally found in Bulgaria - bearded, griffon, black and Egyptian. This represents 17% of the species diversity of vultures in the world. In the middle of the last century, their number was close to zero. Since 1991, nature protection organizations in Bulgaria have been implementing programs and activities for the return and protection of vultures. Currently, two species - the bearded and the black, are still extinct as nesting in the country, and the other two - the griffon /433 birds at the end of 2020/ and the Egyptian /126 birds at the end of 2020/ are extremely rare and require conservation of special care, not only by conservation organizations, but by society as a whole.

Purpose

Establishing the attitude of young people in Bulgaria today to the life of vultures and researching what are the effective means to improve awareness and opportunities for participation in solving socially significant problems such as biodiversity conservation in our country, to help conservation organizations we work with.

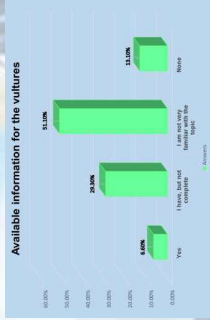
Approach



The research is conducted through an online survey in January throughout Bulgaria. The sample was formed at random. 229 young people aged 15-23 years were studied.

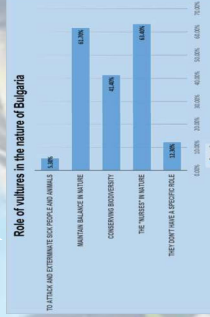
Main findings

Negative trends



Only 6.6% of all respondents actually know vultures, i.e. adequate information reaches them. However, the majority of respondents do not have: 29.3% only heard, 51.1% not much, and 13.1% are ignorant.

Positive trends



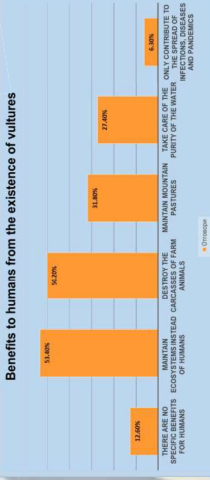
Most young people are aware of the importance of vultures for the balance of nature and only 17.6% believe that they have no positive role or harm.

Main conclusions

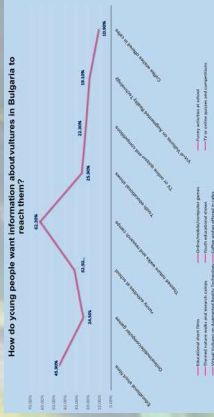
- There is a discrepancy between vultures and young people today - information "crack": about the species of vulture; for its ecological role in nature and its benefits; for the projects and activities for the return of the vultures in Bulgaria; about the ways to help every citizen.
- Despite the apparent lack of knowledge about vultures, young people today want to receive information in an unconventional, but effective and secure way through communication channels covering the places where they most often reside.
- Young people would be involved in any activities related to the return of vultures to Bulgaria, as long as they are intrigued.

Suggestions and recommendations

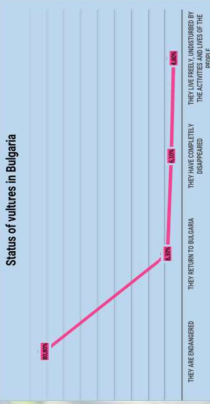
- Assigning certain groups of young people, such as ours, to develop adequate modern information materials or to offer and implement innovative activities.
- Implementation of trainings for trainers in schools and systematic and long-term activities according to the method "Peers train peers".
- Using modern digital and digital technologies to engage young people is a necessity.



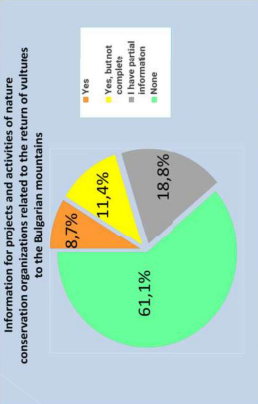
Most often - 83.4% of respondents indicate that the main benefit is the maintenance of ecosystems instead of humans, as well as the destruction of carcasses of farm animals - 50.2%, which is known to save costs. Negative attitude or no benefit show a frequency totaling 18.9%.



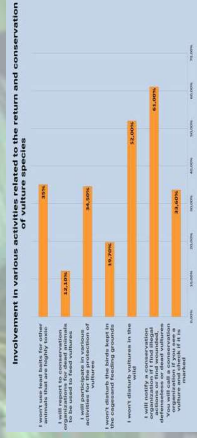
However, young people tend to enrich their knowledge of vultures' lives and conservation activities. The undisputed leader in frequency with 62.3% among the ways of learning are thematic walks in nature and research camps. With a share of 45.9% follow the films - educational short and feature. Young people also expect fun activities in schools - 32.3%, as well as online games, online quizzes, youth educational shows and competitions.



Also, only 8.3% of respondents know that in recent years vultures are struggling to return to the nature of Bulgaria. 80.8% of the population believe that they are simply an endangered species.



Despite the long-term nature protection measures in different directions and increasing the institutional capacity for conservation, 91.3% of young people are almost unaware of the projects and activities for the return and conservation of vultures in Bulgaria.



Young people are active and would be involved in a variety of activities, with well over half ready to alert birds in distress or illegal activities. The desire of as many as 34.5% for inclusion in real activities for the protection of vultures is also indicative.

Additional research is needed by environmental organizations in Bulgaria on how to intrigue young people, because the protection of vultures, biodiversity and balance in nature is the responsibility and commitment of society as a whole.