

# WE MAKE BIRD-SAFE POWER LINES IN WESTERN BULGARIA

LIFE BIRDS on POWER LINES, LIFE16 NAT/BG/000612

Power infrastructure often exposes the life of wild birds at risk.

lifebirds.eu

## Project challenges

1) **prevention of electrocution** - When a bird alights on electric pole, it may cause electrocution resulting in its death and power interruption.

2) **prevention of collision with power lines** - While flying, birds can collide into overhead power lines as they are hardly visible, especially in bad weather conditions and low visibility.

## Project objectives

- Reduction of bird mortality caused by electrocution upon alighting on distribution poles and crashing into overhead power lines;
- Ensuring safe nesting places for white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) in Western Bulgaria;
- Reinforcing the support of the society and the stakeholders in solving the conflict between wild birds and overhead power lines.
- Promotion of general benefits for biodiversity and people.

## Main project activities

- Identification of power lines that are dangerous for the birds;
- Creating of GIS database of risk sections;
- Carrying out field researches about bird mortality in conflict areas with the power distribution system;
- Making power distribution poles safe by installation of insulation and protective products that protect birds against electrocution;
- Making overhead power lines with diverters;
- Making 900 risky stork nests safe by installation of metal platforms;
- Design of pole prototype that is safe for the birds and installation of such pole in key project areas;
- Raising awareness of key institutions and other stakeholders about the nature of challenges and solutions.

## Introduced solutions

- Making bird-dangerous electric poles safe with the use of various insulation covers;
- Installation of "diverters" to be hanged along the overhead power lines at specific distance to make cables visible for the birds;
- Making risky stork nests safer by lifting them on special metal platforms in order to increase the distance between the nest and the power lines;
- Installation of bird-friendly poles on site.

## Methods

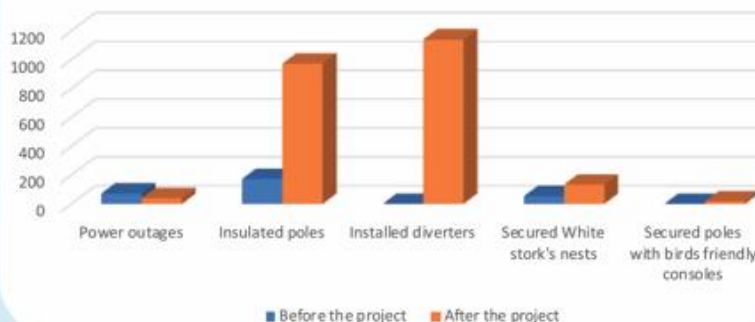
- Field surveys to check birds mortality caused by electrocution/ collision.
- Assessment of the number of platforms occupied by White Storks.
- Assessment of the number and trends in the local population of White Storks.
- Analysis of the reasons of power outages.

## Results

- After the field survey in 2022 two victims of collision were found. No victims were found in 2023.
- About 97% of the installed platforms are occupied by White Storks.
- Increased public awareness.
- The highest percentage in power outages is achieved in "Pleven" region – app. 45%.



Region "Pleven"



	Before the project	After the project
Power outages	72	39
Insulated poles	173	973
Installed diverters	0	1140
Secured White stork's nests	53	133
Secured poles with birds friendly consoles	0	16