

GPS helps to monitor compliance with environmental law in new study

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Researchers from Spain have demonstrated how equipping wildlife with GPS devices can help enforce environmental laws. The findings are published in a *Journal of Applied Ecology* study.

In the study, conducted by the University of Oviedo and the Spanish National Research Council, information provided by GPS tagged griffon vultures and wolves was used to assess if livestock carcasses left in the countryside complied with European sanitary regulations.

Hundreds of livestock carcasses were located through on-site visits to the animals equipped with GPS. Thus, the researchers could evaluate compliance with the criteria required by regulation. An example would be whether the carcasses are within authorized areas, and a sufficient distance away from buildings.

Carcasses from three different Spanish areas (Asturias, Galicia and Castilla y Leon), alongside some areas in northern Portugal were examined. Overall, a low level of compliance with [carcass](#) management regulations was found in all areas studied. These results reveal a remarkable lack of continuity between the regulations on paper, compared to in practice.

Recommendations that arise from this study suggest simplifying bureaucratic procedures within the regulations. Providing farmers with training to increase their understanding is also recommended.

Dr. Patricia Mateo-Tomas, first author of the study, says, "The implementation of an on-site monitoring program could help to evaluate the effectiveness of European sanitary regulations on [biodiversity conservation](#)." In this regard, the GPS monitoring technique used in the study would be very useful.

The [animals](#) tracked in the study are part of a network that informs managing authorities of various threats to wildlife in the area, like poaching for example. The study also highlights how useful GPS monitoring can be in reducing biodiversity and conservation threats.

More information: Patricia Mateo-Tomás et al, Wildlife as sentinels of compliance with law: An example with GPS-tagged scavengers and sanitary regulations, *Journal of Applied Ecology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/1365-2664.14487](https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.14487)

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