



Record: Highest flying bird

Range:

Animal name: Rüppell's griffon vulture

Scientific Name: *Gyps rueppellii*

Type of animal: Bird

Habitat: Cliffs and grasslands of eastern Africa

Size: 33-38 in (84 - 97 cm) height, 8 ft (2.5 meter)

Status: wingspan

Facts: Critically endangered

Rüppell's Griffon Vulture is one big bird! It can grow to be about three feet tall with an 8-foot wingspan. With its powerful wings it can fly as many as seven hours a day and is known to fly 35,000 feet (10,668 m) high. That's as high as a passenger jet. Vultures are important to the ecosystem because they eat carrion (dead animals). This helps prevent the spread of disease in the wild. For a long time scientists didn't know why vultures have bald heads. Recently they discovered a bald head helps vultures control their body temperature. That's important as the birds go from the very hot ground to the very cold temperatures found at high altitudes.



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