**Vocabulary Sheet**

*Adaptable*

Able to adjust to new conditions. In animals, examples include taking advantage of a new food source or moving into a new habitat type.

*Brooding*

The period of time after egg-laying in which parents care for and raise chicks to be ready to leave the nest.

*Carcass and Carrion*

The remains or dead body of an animal.

*Communal roost*

A place in which a group of individual birds gather in one area. In black vultures communal roosting is associated with resting, sleeping, and/or gathering information from one another.

*Crop*

An expanded pouch in the digestive tract used by birds to temporarily store and partially digest food.

*Ecology*

The branch of biology that studies relations of organisms among one another as well as with their physical environment.

*Ecosystem Services*

The direct and indirect contributions of ecosystems (and the organisms within) to human well-being.

*Ephemeral*

Lasting for a very short time (a rotting carcass, as an example).

*Fledge*

When a bird leaves the nest after developing the necessary flight feathers

*Forage*

A wide search over an area for food or other resources.

*Human commensal*

An organism that benefits from interacting with humans, while humans remain largely unaffected by interacting with the organism. The term “commensal” comes from the Latin word *mensa* meaning “table.” In the case of black vultures, they can be thought of as obtaining most of their food from our “common table.”

*Human Persecution*

In the case of black vultures: a decision to drive away and/or kill birds because they are considered a nuisance, a threat to livestock, or are disliked for other reasons.

*Incubating*

When a parent bird sits on eggs to keep them warm and allow the embryo to develop and hatch.

*Inference*

A conclusion reached on the basis of reasoning or evidence.

*Life History*

The sequence of events related to survival, reproduction, and death that occur during the life of an organism.

*Monogamous*

Having one mate at a time.

*Movement ecology*

Movement ecology is the study of geography, timing, and movements by individual organisms within their ecological neighborhoods.

*Raptor*

Birds of prey that possess talons, a sharp hooked bill, and keen eyesight for locating food. This group includes the hawks, eagles, falcons, and vultures of the world.

*Roosting site*

A place where birds regularly settle or rest during the day or night.

*Scavenger*

An animal that feeds on dead plant and animal material or waste.

*Short-distance migrant*

An organism that migrates only a short distance (usually fewer than 1000 miles).

*Site fidelity*

Tendency of an organism to return to a previously occupied location. With birds this typically means choosing the same nesting site each year, or the same stopover site during its migrations.

*Telemetry*

The use of technology that allows scientists to track the movements of animals. The word *telemetry* means “distance measuring” in Greek.

*Thermal*

Warm pockets of rising air that form when the sun heats the Earth’s surface at different times over different surfaces.

*Winter refuge*

A site that provides security to a species during the winter if their typical home no longer contains what they need (food, shelter, warmth, etc.).