VULTURE Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium
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Eurasian vulture *Gyps fulvus*. Modified by Sara Mateo from www.shutterstock.com “By Nadzin. Royalty-free stock vector images ID: 611766905” under “Plus Licencia Estándar”.

See the section **Other information** at the end of this template for additional vulture and condor species.

Abstract

This proposal is to request the inclusion of a new emoji as a Unicode character: **VULTURE emoji**. Vultures and condors are a visually distinct species and the only vertebrates that feed exclusively on carrion, having therefore many figurative meanings related to, for example, negative concepts such as death or greed but also to positive ones such as cleanness, renewal or clairvoyance. This proposal represents an opportunity to broaden the set of Animal emoji by including a characteristic and unique member of the animal kingdom.

Introduction

Vultures and condors are large raptor species specialized on consuming exclusively death animal matter (carrion), i.e. they are obligate scavengers. To locate this ephemeral food, they have keen eyesight and a large ability to move with low energy consumption by soaring), so they have large wingspans of up to 3 m length. 23 species of vultures and condors inhabit all the continents but Australia and Antarctica. 17 out of these 23 species are currently threatened or near threatened according to the The Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN 2018; www.iucnredlist.org/search?query=vulture&searchType=species). The major threats are related to human persecution (e.g. by poisoning and poaching) and human-mediated carrion, from farming or hunting, contaminated with veterinary drugs, lead or other toxic compounds. Collisions with wind turbines and power lines also threat vultures and condors worldwide. By rapidly consuming dead animals, vultures and condors are widely recognized as important and beneficial species recycling energy and nutrients in natural ecosystems and contributing to carcass disposal and control of disease spreading. Furthermore, as carrion-eaters they are also associated with death, having important cultural and spiritual roles in ancient cultures (e.g. Parsi in India), while being traditionally related with bad feelings in occidental cultures (e.g. death, greed…). Vulture funds are in fact used to describe investors that take profit of companies in difficulties. Other associated meanings of vultures and condors are

related to protection and clairvoyance (because their high ability to rapidly locate carcass over large areas).

Complete information on species and threats is available at the **Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP)** (www.cms.int/raptors/en/workinggroup/multi-species-action-plan-conserve-african-eurasian-vultures) and IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2018; www.iucnredlist.org).

1. Identification

1.A. CLDR short name: Vulture

1.B. CLDR keywords: bird, carcass, cleansing, death, patience, protection, rapacious or predatory person, raptor, renewal, scavenger, "tumbusi" (vulture in Swahili), vulture fund.

2. Selection factors — Inclusion

2.A. Compatibility

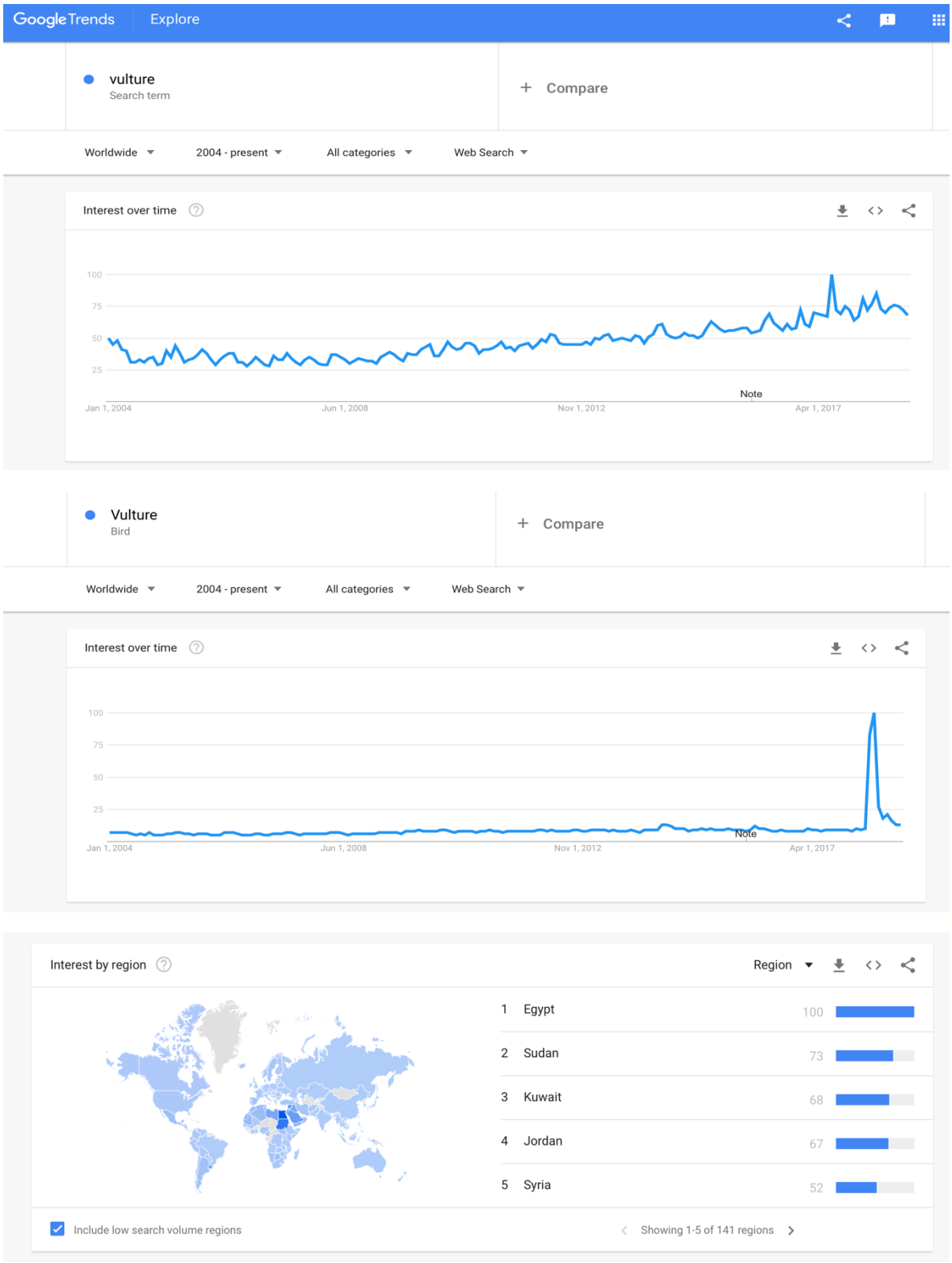
This is a new emoji for inclusion in Unicode and other systems. It will contribute to various phrases and usages as defined below.

2.B. Expected usage level

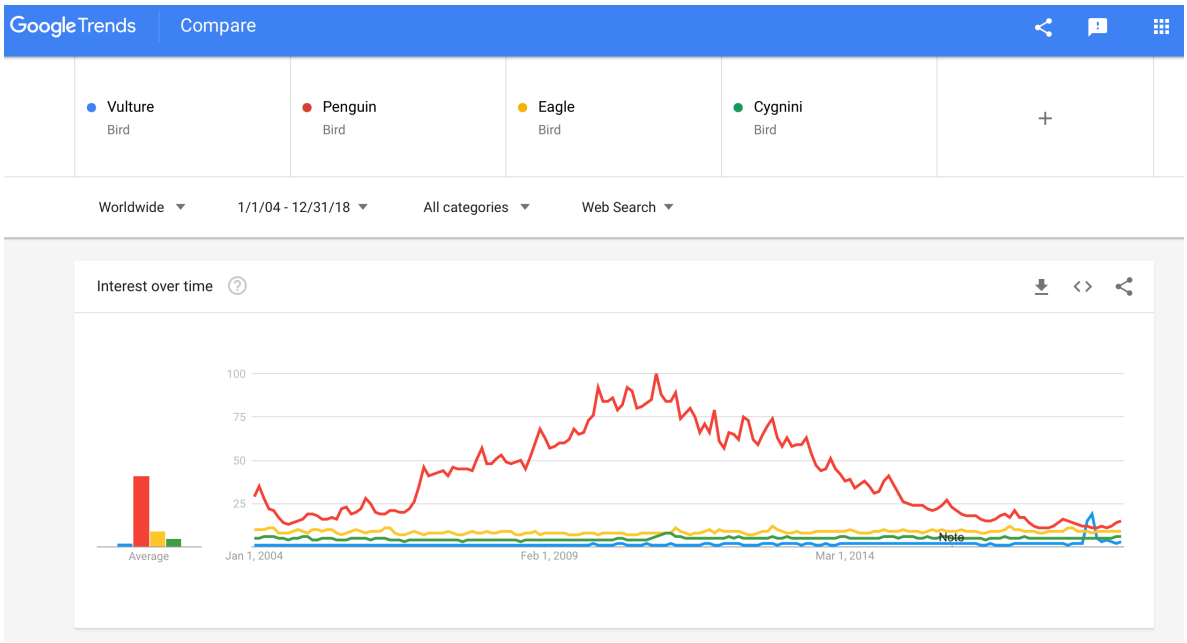
2.B.1. Frequency (must have separate evidence for each proposed emoji)

According to "Google Trends", in the longest period available (January 1st, 2004 – December 26th 2018), search interest of vulture (blue line) has increased from 50 to values around 75 (i.e. meaning that the term is 3/4 as popular). Vulture as a bird increased also in the same period, from ~6 to values around 20, with a sharp increase in June 2018.

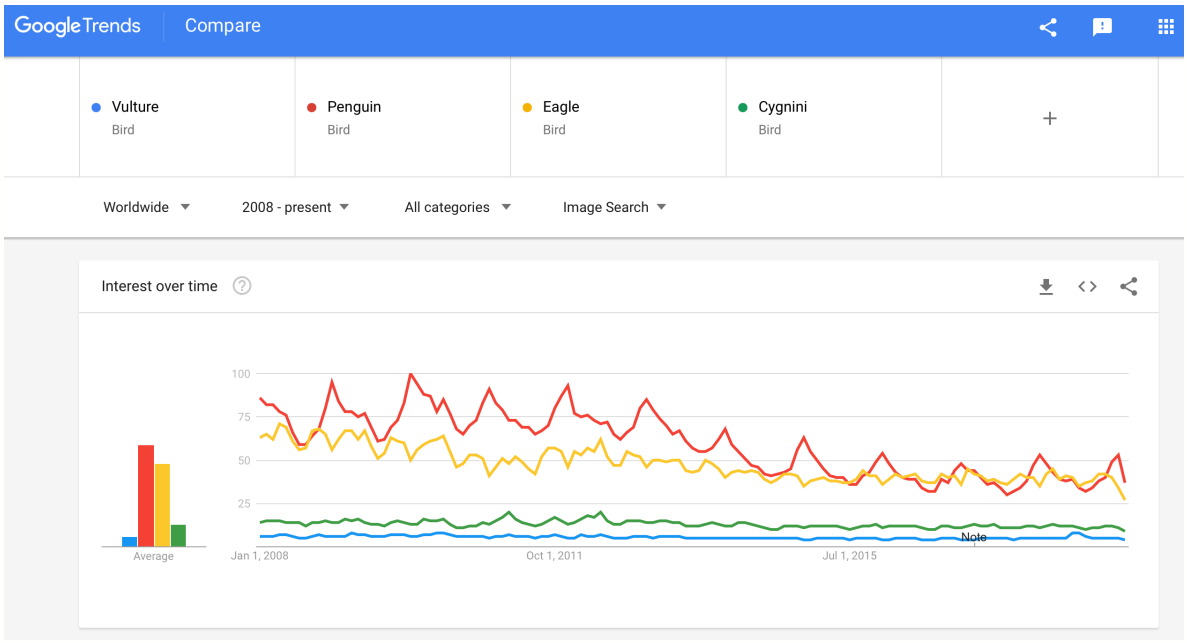
Interest for the term "vulture" as a bird exist in all the continents, even in Australia where vultures are not present.


Google Trends
Explore
vulture
Search term
Compare
Worldwide
2004 - present
All categories
Web Search
Interest over time
100
75
50
25
Note
Jan 1, 2004
Jun 1, 2008
Nov 1, 2012
Apr 1, 2017
Vulture
Bird
Compare
Worldwide
2004 - present
All categories
Web Search
Interest over time
100
75
50
25
Note
Jan 1, 2004
Jun 1, 2008
Nov 1, 2012
Apr 1, 2017
Interest by region
Region
1 Egypt 100
2 Sudan 73
3 Kuwait 68
4 Jordan 67
5 Syria 52
Include low search volume regions
Showing 1-5 of 141 regions

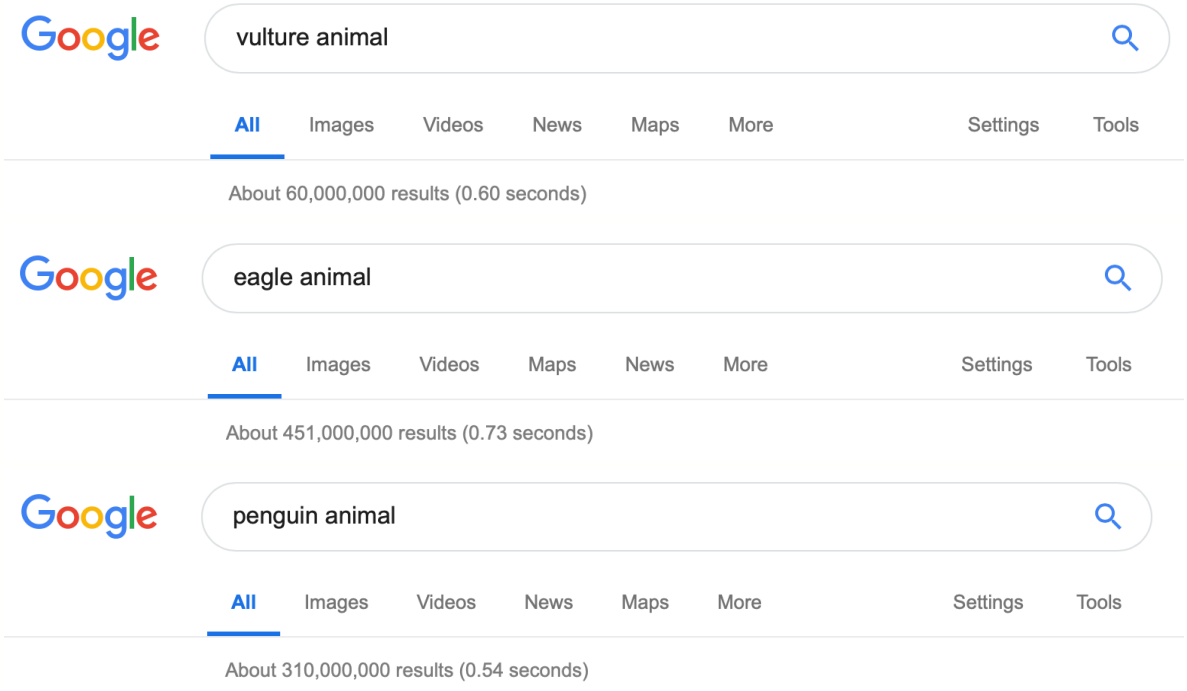
We compared the results obtained in Google Trends for the proposed term to those of already existing emoji representing birds: i.e. eagle, as a bird included long ago, swan (as Cygnini to be considered as a bird and avoid comparing terms measured differently), recently accepted as emoji by Unicode, and penguin, as reference emoji for the bird category. Vulture has lower usage than eagle, swan and penguin during the period considered (2004-2018) but June 2018, when vulture showed an extremely high usage. While the usage of eagle and swan as birds showed steady trends and penguin decreased sharply, the usage of vulture as a bird slightly increased during the considered period.

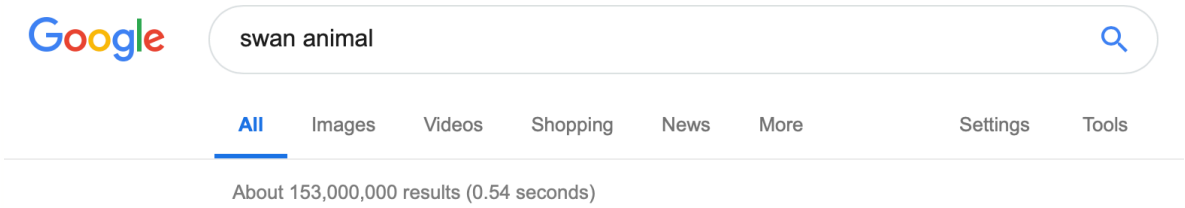


The results for “Image search” in Google Trends showed similar results to those obtained for “Web search”, but while eagle and penguin decreased in popularity, vulture showed a steady trend.

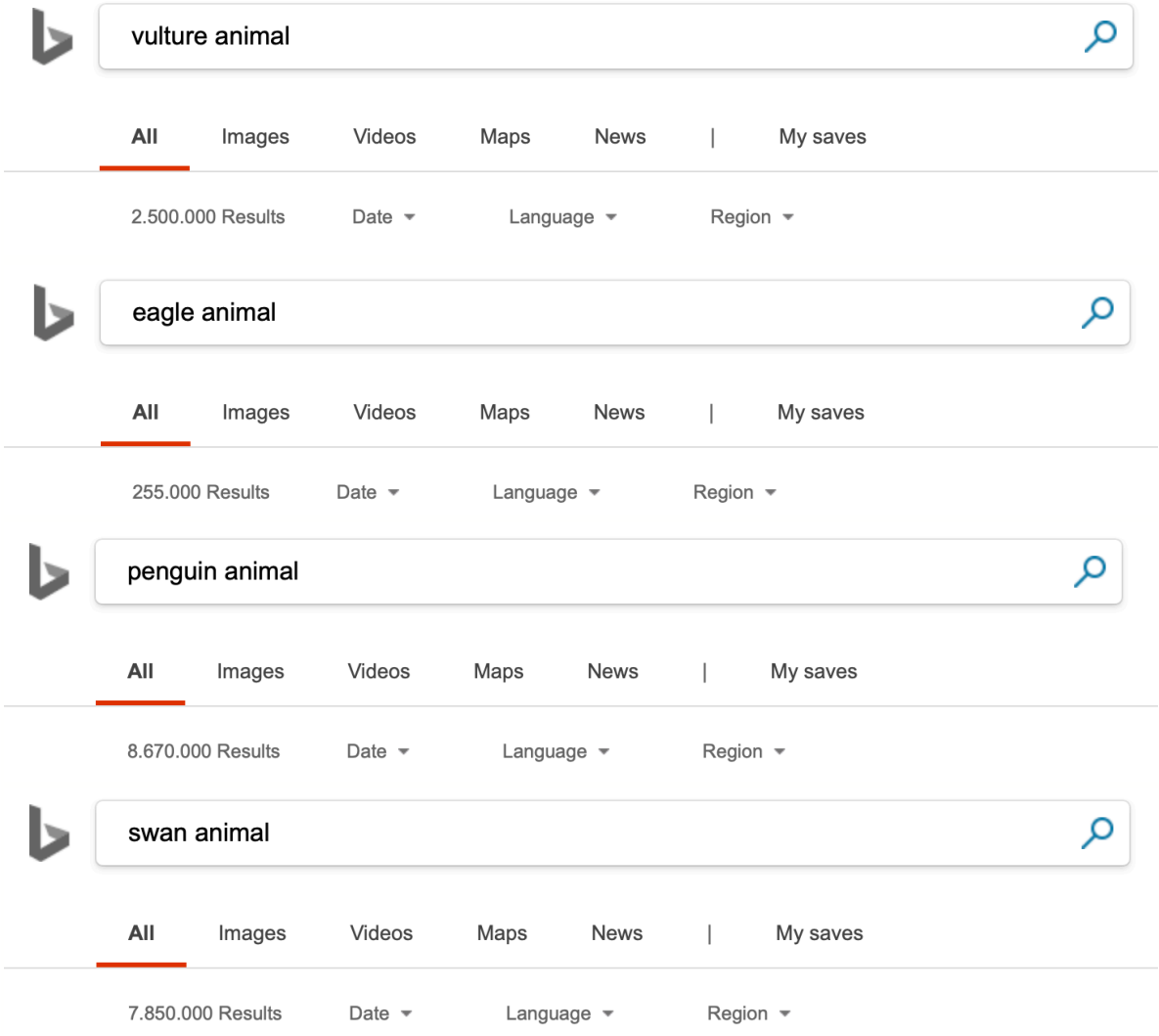


Google Web Search (December 31st, 2018):

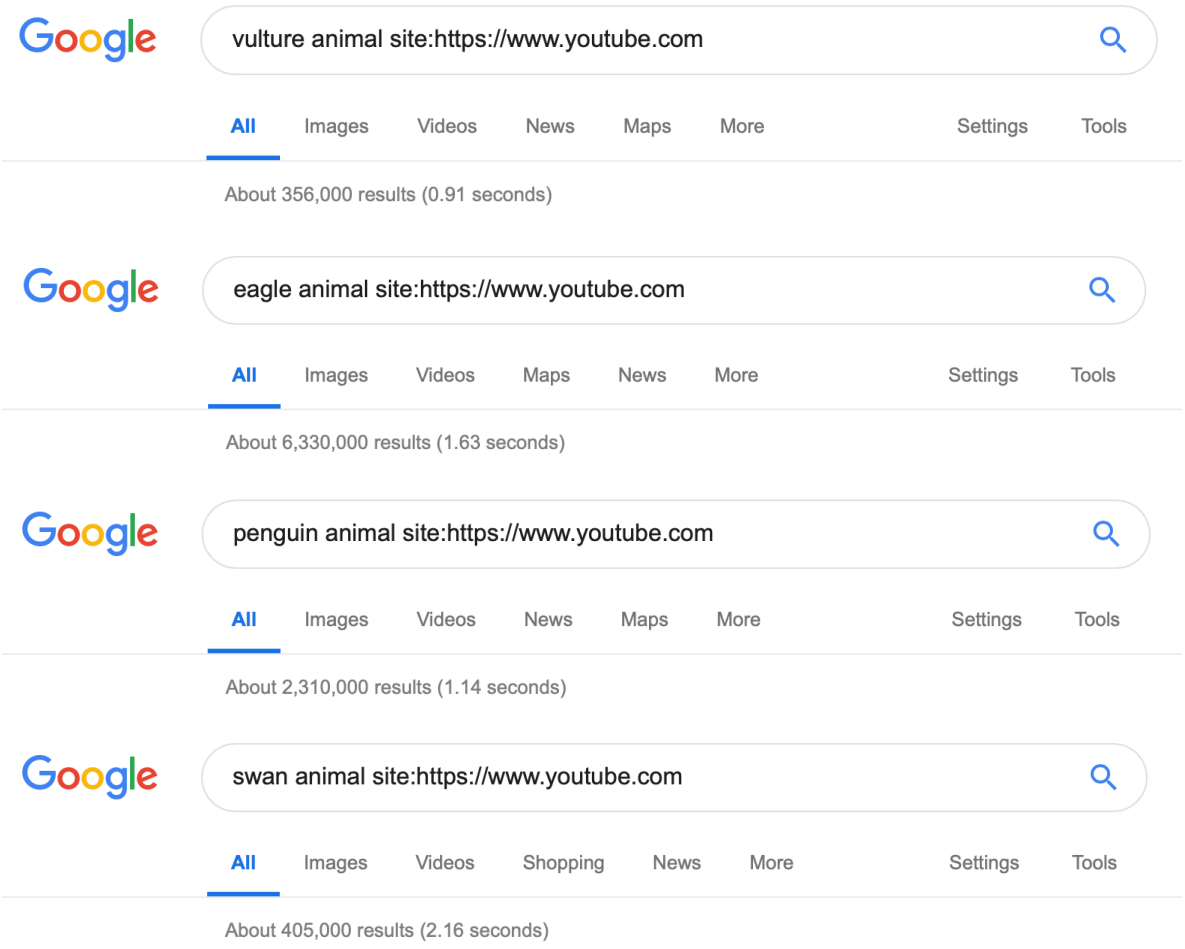




Bing Web Search (December 31st, 2018):



You Tube search (December 31st, 2018):



2.B.2. Multiple Usages

The emoji here proposed can be used to refer to multiple concepts, from their literal meanings as animals to figurative terms referring to people, behaviors and other concepts:

1-. Vultures are **birds**, raptors and obligate scavengers (i.e. they feed exclusively on carrion).

2-. Since they feed on carrion, vultures are frequently used to represent **death**.

3-. Vulture is also used to refer to a **rapacious or predatory person** in different cultures and languages (e.g. English, Spanish).

4-. Vultures are also used to represent behaviors such as **patience**.

5-. By consuming rotten carcasses vultures prevent the spread of diseases while recycling nutrients and energy, so they are also related to **cleansing, renewal and transformation** not only in ecology and wildlife conservation disciplines but also in many different cultures.

6-. Since the world financial crisis in 2007-2008, **vulture fund** has become a popular word used to refer to an investment fund that takes profit of companies in default.

7-. In ancient cultures such as Egyptians or Mayas, vultures and condors mean **protection**.

8-. Indigenous African and American cultures consider that vultures and condors (due to their acute vision, and ability to find carrion) possess **clairvoyant** powers.

2.B.3. Use in sequences

Vulture emoji can be used in several sequences, e.g. those related to animals and birds as well as figurative ones such as those related to death or those related to money and greed (as in vulture funds).

2.B.4. Breaking new ground

The proposed emoji represent a new animal guild not considered up to date, i.e. vultures and condors. In fact, the only raptors already considered are the eagle and the owl, which are different species, with different appearances, ecological roles and figurative meanings.

2.C. Image distinctiveness

Vulture images are perfectly recognized and distinct from the already existing emoji (e.g. eagle, owl and other birds).

2.D. Completeness

Vulture will continue to build out birds and raptors in the Animals part of emoji. They are not part of a series such as Zodiac symbols, but they belong with the other raptor emoji (i.e. eagle, owl) as well as with symbols meaning death or greed.



2.E. Frequently requested

n/a

3. Selection factors — Exclusion.

3.F. Overly specific

The proposed vulture emoji is recognizable, relevant and not overly specific. The emoji represents species of a major guild does not included up to date, i.e. vultures. See at the end of this proposal for further suggestions on how to handle the inclusion of several vulture and condor species.

3.G. Open-ended

The vulture emoji is not just one of many items within a set; it is distinct and does not open up a direct open-ended set of related symbols.

3.H. Already representable

As previously explained, the vulture emoji cannot currently be represented by an existing emoji. The closest option would be to use the Eagle emoji, or other birds but none of them offer an accurate representation of a vulture as it is a physically distinct species.

3.I. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

Vultures and condors are largely used for non-profit organizations related to their conservation and they are also represented as deities in some ancient cultures (see above). Nonetheless, they are wild species and therefore they are neither registered brands nor associated to a particular stigma.

3.J. Transient

The vulture emoji will represent a guild including up to 23 different species widely distributed in almost all continents but Australia and Antarctica. Although some of these species are threatened with extinction, the entire guild is not expected to disappear, especially considering the important efforts currently under way for conserving these species worldwide.

3.K. Faulty comparison

The vulture emoji is not proposed because of its similarity with other existing emoji. In fact, it is proposed on its own merits to fill an existing gap in the Animals section that also affect figurative meanings widely used across the world (see above).

3.L. Exact images

The proposal does not request an exact image since vultures have widely recognized characteristics.

4. Sort location

The vulture emoji should be added as a full-bodied, side-facing emoji in the Animals category. A logical placement would be near the eagle emoji.

5. Other information

In line with the multiracial and multicultural spirit currently incorporated into the emoji, we would like to propose a multiracial/multicultural vulture emoji that will allow people from all the world to select the vulture or condor species that better represents them. For example, the Eurasian griffon can represent people in Europe but also in Asia and Africa (because its similarity with other vulture species of the same genus, i.e. Gyps; see, for example, Vultures of the World at https://www.birdorable.com/vultures/), condors and turkey vultures will better represent people in America. Additionally, other vulture species such as the bearded and the Egyptian vultures will be more familiar to people in Europe, Southeast Asia and South Africa. Finally, large vultures such as the cinereous, red-headed and lappet-faced vultures are present in Europe, Asia and Africa, respectively.