



**Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus (EN)**

This long-lived species qualifies as Endangered owing to extreme rapid population decline in India (presumably resulting from poisoning by the veterinary drug Diclofenac).

**Population justification**

Estimated global population is 20,000-61,000 individuals, roughly equivalent to 13,000-41,000 mature individuals.

**Trend Justification**

In India, it has declined by >90% in the last decade.

**Threats**

Diclofenac is the main threat in India. Decrease of Gyps vulture population allows this species to feed on the internal organs of caracass leads to diclofenac poisoning. Other worldwide threats are disturbance, lead poisoning (from gun shot), direct poisoning, electrocution (by powerlines), collisions with wind turbines & powerlines, reduced food availability, illegal poisoning against carnivores, loss of wild ungulate populations, overgrazing and habitat change.

**Conservation Actions Underway**

Monitoring programmes, supplementary feeding, captive breeding, satellite tracking and campaigns against illegal use of poisons, public awareness. The veterinary drug Diclofenac has now been banned and the bird is listed in Schedule IV of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 by the Indian government. Nest guarding schemes for pairs that are most threatened by poachers have been implemented in some countries. Birds have been fitted with satellite-tags to study juvenile dispersion, migratory movements and wintering areas.



**Bearded Vulture Gypaetus barbatus (NT)**

This species has been uplisted to Near Threatened owing to evidence that it has undergone a moderately rapid population decline over the past three generations.

**Population justification**

A global estimate of population is 2,000-10,000 individuals, roughly equating to 1,300-6,700 mature individuals.

**Trend Justification**

It is suspected that the population has declined by 25-29% over the past three generations.

**Threats**

Main threat is diclofenac drug for South Asian vultures. This species is primarily a bone-eater, presence of diclofenac in bones is not yet known, although its residues are found in feathers and hair. The decrease in other Gyps species allows this species to access and feed on soft tissues with diclofenac residues. The threats in Himalayas are the competition for food by feral dogs, habitat destruction by grazing, human population, powerline and pipeline construction. In Nepal nestlings are collected by locals as symbol of good omen, hunting for intestine used in traditional medicines. The use of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides may also have impacts on the species.

**Conservation Actions underway**

Captive breeding and reintroduction programmes have been carried out in the Austrian, French, Italian and Swiss Alps, Kenya and Spain. Feeding stations resulted in increase in numbers of the species.



**Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus (NT)**

This species has a moderately small population which appears to be suffering an ongoing decline in its Asiatic strongholds. Consequently it qualifies as Near Threatened.

**Population justification**

Its global population is estimated to number 7,200-10,000 pairs, 5,500-8,000 pairs in Asia.

**Trend justification**

Larger Asian population appears to be in decline. Overall, a slow to moderate and on-going decline is suspected.

**Threats**

The two main threats to the species are direct mortality caused by humans and decreasing availability of food. The main cause of unnatural death is the use of poisoned baits for predator extermination. There are fears that Diclofenac, may have a negative impact on this species, as it winters in northern India. Antibiotic residues, particularly quinolones, assumed to cause liver and kidney damage, alter bacteria flora, facilitating pathogenic bacterial and fungal infections. Other threats are food scarcity, habitat loss and change in temperature due to climate change.

**Conservation Actions Underway**

Poison free food supply, Captive breeding programs.

BirdLife International (2016) Species factsheet: Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 23/06/2016.

Recommended citation for factsheets for more than one species: BirdLife International (2016) IUCN Red List for birds. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 23/06/2016

**World Nature Conservation Day**  
**28 July**

*Save vultures*



## Threatened Gyps vultures



Tulsi Subedi

### Red-headed Vulture *Aegypius calvus* (CR)

Extremely rapid population reduction in the recent past largely by diclofenac poisoning qualifies it as Critically Endangered.

#### Population justification

Few hundred individuals as its rarity of South-East Asia, while the total population seems to exceed 10,000 mature individuals across India and the apparently catastrophic very recent declines.

#### Trend justification

It is reported that decline of 94% from 1992 to 2003 in India. Similar declines are expected throughout the Indian Subcontinent.

#### Threats

Diclofenac poisoning resulted in rapid decline since 21st century. Other threats are demise of wild ungulates from Asia, intensification of agriculture, increased sophistication of waste disposal techniques, direct persecution and disease, use of poisons to catch fish or waterbirds.

#### Conservation Actions Underway

A recent study found that Red-headed Vulture population declines in India had slowed and following a ban on manufacture, sale and distribution of diclofenac their numbers increased. Drug Controller General of India in 2008 warned drug firms not to sell the veterinary diclofenac, and to mark human diclofenac containers 'not for veterinary use'. Drug companies have now developed meloxicam, an alternative to diclofenac, which found safe for Gyps vultures.



Pratik Tambe

### White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* (CR)



Ajinkya Bhatkar

### Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus* (CR)



Suvrashi Sarkar

### Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris* (CR)



Ajinkya Bhatkar

### Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* (NT)

All *Gyps* qualifies as Critically Endangered because of an extremely rapid population decline except Himalayan which qualifies as Near Threatened due to moderate population decline suspected in near future.

#### Threats of Gyps Vultures

Diclofenac was a main cause of mortality of Gyps vultures in mid-2000 in India, Nepal and Pakistan. Another veterinary drug used in India, Ketoprofen, has found lethal to this species recently. Other potential threats are changes in human consumption & processing of dead livestock, habitat destruction, less food availability, nesting site destruction, non-target poisoning, avian malaria and pesticide use.

#### Conservation Actions Underway of Gyps Vultures

The governments of India, Nepal and Pakistan banned manufacture and importation of diclofenac as a veterinary drug in 2006. Indian government banned the sale, distribution/ use of veterinary diclofenac, crackdown on companies selling diclofenac in 2008. An alternative drug; meloxicam has been proved safe for Gyps vultures. Areas around vulture breeding colonies were educated and advocated to eliminate the use of diclofenac and other vulture-toxic drugs. 12 provisional Vulture Safe Zones (VSZ) are being established in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Within this area, diclofenac-free carrion is provided at feeding stations known as 'vulture restaurants'. These are new ecotourism attractions to raise awareness and fund for feeding programmes and research. Captive breeding is a huge initiative undertaken by BNHS, India.

Birds fitted with Satellite tag to monitor their movements, foraging range, site fidelity etc.

A special website helped researcher to contribute data on known colonies to identify individuals for captive breeding. This will ensure better gene flow.

In 2012 the governments of India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh took up testing other NSAIDs for toxicity to vultures and expanding the VSZ initiative.

Maximum number of IBAs where these species has triggered the IBA criteria are from Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Kerala, Uttaranchal, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Orissa, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, Punjab, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh.



Siddhesh Surve

### Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* (LC)

This species has an extremely large range, thus does not fulfil the range size criteria as well as its population is fairly good in the range so could not fall under vulnerable category and is evaluated as Least concerned as of now.

#### Population justification

Preliminary estimate of the global population size is 648,000-688,000 mature individuals, 500,000-999,999 mature individuals.

#### Trend justification

The central Asian population is suspected to be stable. However, the overall population trend is suspected to increase.

#### Threats

It declined markedly throughout the 19th-20th centuries in much of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, mainly due to direct persecution and "bycatch" from the poisoned carcasses set for livestock predators. Other threats are reduction in available food supplies due to change in livestock management practice, highly vulnerable to potential wind turbines and electrocution. Poisoning by Fluxin and diclofenac (an NSAID) is a threat across Asia.