

# Asia Overview

Chris Bowden – Co-Chair VSG, RSPB & SAVE



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Credit: Jonathan C Eames



**Introducing:**  
**10 breeding vulture species**  
**(+ 2 vagrant Gyps from Africa)**  
**4 Cliff nesters / 6 Tree nesters - 6 Migrants, 4 Sedentary**  
**5 are Gyps species**



*Himalayan Griffon, Indian Long-billed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture.*

*Eurasian Griffon, Indian White-backed Vulture, Red-headed Vulture.*

Courtesy of Rishad Naoroji



Indian Vulture (Long-billed)

*Gyps indicus*

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Credit: Mandy West



## White-rumped Vulture

*Gyps bengalensis*

## Slender-billed Vulture

*Gyps tenuirostris*

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# Himalayan Vulture (Griffon)

*Gyps himalayensis*



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The image features two Eurasian Griffons against a clear blue sky. One bird is in flight on the left, showing its brown and grey wings. The other is perched on a rusty metal structure on the right, displaying its light brown and white plumage. A large, semi-transparent watermark of a griffin's head is centered in the background. Text is overlaid on the top right and bottom center.

# Eurasian Griffon

*Gyps fulvus fulvescens*

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# 5 Non-Gyps species

Resident

Migratory



# Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)

*N. p. ginginianus*

*N. p. percnopterus*



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Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*)

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Red-headed Vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*)

Female



Male



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Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*)

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Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*)



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Credit: Andre Botha

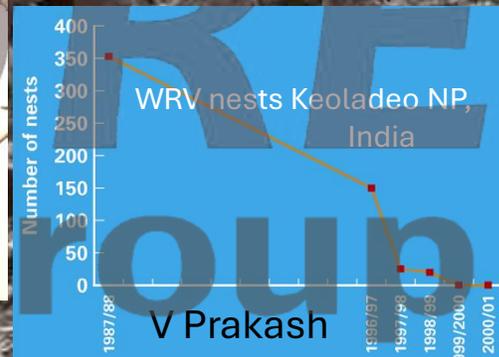
# Population trends

99.9% declines of White-rumped vulture (India) 1992-2007



THE ROYAL SOCIETY **biology letters**

Diclofenac poisoning is widespread among vulture populations in India  
.....  
**Diclofenac residues as the cause of vulture population decline in Pakistan**

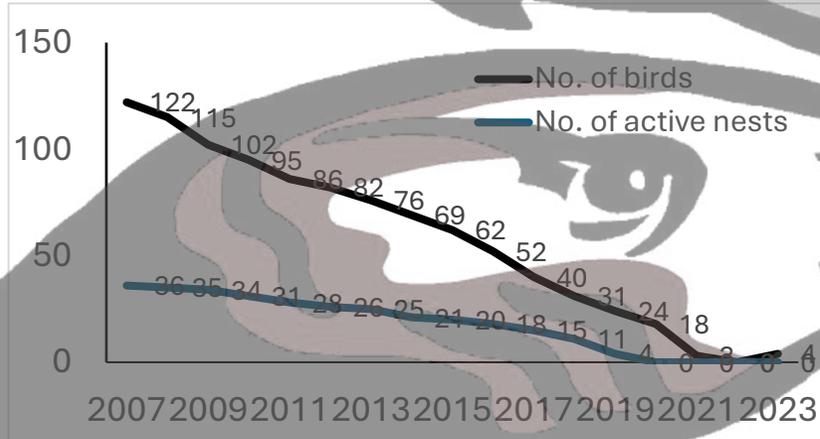


V Prakash

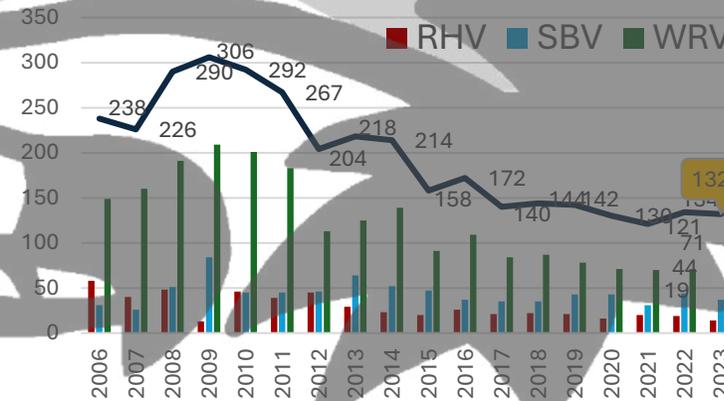
Credit: Gautham Narayan

# More recent population trends monitored

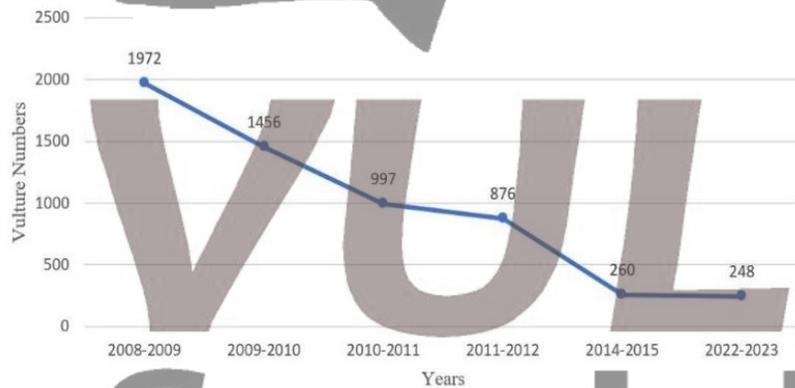
Pakistan WRV 2007-2023



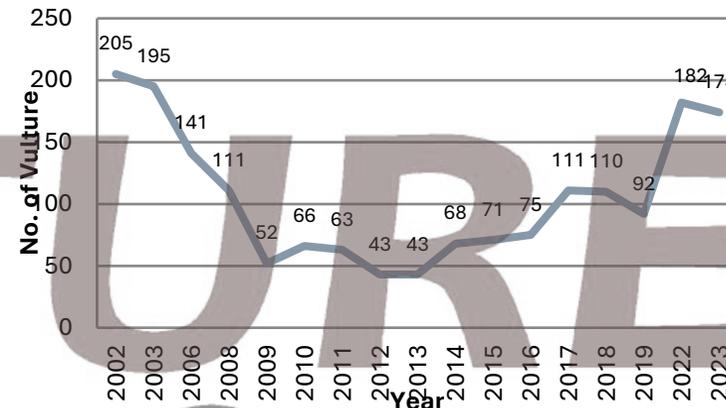
Cambodia 2006 - 2023



Bangladesh 2008-2023



Nepal 2002-2023



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# MSAP Threats Map for Asia (Botha et al. 2017)

- WEST ASIA**
- Unintentional poisoning (poison baits)
  - Electrocution on energy infrastructure
  - Collision with energy infrastructure
  - Decline of food availability
  - Human disturbance
  - Habitat degradation (incl. loss of nest trees)

- EUROPE, CENTRAL & EAST ASIA**
- Unintentional poisoning (poison baits)
  - Electrocution on energy infrastructure
  - Decline of food availability
  - Collision with energy infrastructure
  - Unintentional poisoning (NSAIDs)
  - Unintentional poisoning (lead)
  - Direct persecution (non-poison)



- THREAT PRIORITY**
- CRITICAL
  - HIGH



- SOUTH EAST ASIA**
- Unintentional poisoning (poison baits)
  - Habitat degradation (incl. loss of nest trees)
  - Decline of food availability
  - Collision with energy infrastructure
  - Electrocution on energy infrastructure
  - Intentional poisoning (belief-based use)

- SOUTH ASIA**
- Unintentional poisoning (NSAIDs)
  - Unintentional poisoning (poison baits)
  - Collision with energy infrastructure
  - Electrocution on energy infrastructure

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# Major Threats Asia-wide: 1

## Poison-baits

(targeting dogs, other mammals)

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Credit: Bird Conservation Nepal

**Major Threats: 2**  
**NSAIDs use**  
**especially in cattle**



# Major Threats: 3) Power infrastructure (Electrocution & Collision)



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# Additional Threats across Asia



MULTI-SPECIES ACTION PLAN TO CONSERVE  
AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES (VULTURE MSAP)

CMS Raptors MOU Technical Publication No. 5  
CMS Technical Series No. 35



Food shortage  
Nest-site destruction  
Belief-based use

+

Lead poisoning  
Persecution  
Disturbance

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# Statutory bodies, Networks & Action Plans



**MULTI-SPECIES ACTION PLAN TO CONSERVE  
AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES (VULTURE MSAP)**

CMS Raptors MOU Technical Publication No. 5  
CMS Technical Series No. 35

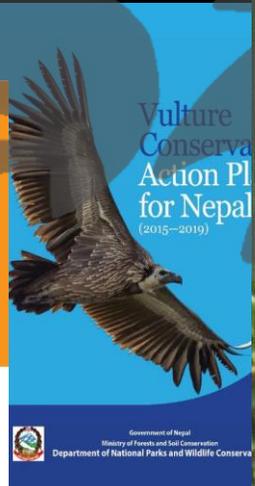


**Vulture MsAP**



**VULTURE  
CONSERVATION  
ACTION PLAN  
(2023-2027)**

Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forests and Environment  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation  
Department of Forests and Soil Conservation



**Vulture  
Conservation  
Action Plan  
for Nepal  
(2015-2019)**

Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation



**Vulture Conservation  
Action Plan for  
(2009-2014)**

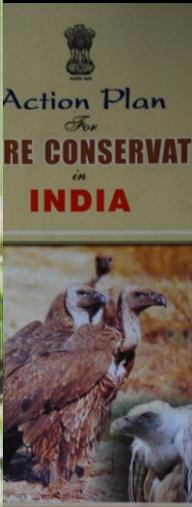
Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation



**ACTION PLAN FOR  
VULTURE  
CONSERVATION  
IN INDIA  
2020-2025**



Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Government of India



**Action Plan  
For  
VULTURE  
CONSERVATION  
in  
INDIA**

जयंते हि संरक्षणी।  
वयंते हि सुरक्षणी।।

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FOREST  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Header and Footer and Apply to All to update presentation



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India

Symposium on  
Developing a Regional Response  
to the Conservation of South Asia's  
Critically Endangered Vulture Species

3-4 May, 2012  
New Delhi, India

Inter-Government Regional Steering Committee  
(Co-Chaired by IUCN Asia)

+ CMS Raptors MoU nominating Govt. Focal Points for all Asia



White-rumped Vulture



Indian Vulture



Slender-billed Vulture



Red-headed Vulture



Egyptian Vulture\*

\*Status - Endangered



Range countries:  
**Pakistan,  
 India,  
 Nepal,  
 Bangladesh,  
 Myanmar,  
 Cambodia**



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# The (SAVE) Blueprint for the Recovery of Asia's Globally Threatened Vultures



[View this email in your browser](#)

**SAVE Newsletter**

September 2025

THE VOICE OF  
VULTURES  
IN ASIA



Dear Partners and Friends of Asian Vultures,

SAVE has been circulating occasional updates since its formation in 2011, along with news items and other



Partnership of 32 organisations (7 range countries) met in Feb 2025 in Cambodia

Refreshed Regional Blueprint Recovery Plan

[www.save-vultures.org](http://www.save-vultures.org)

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# Created 2011 – The SAVE Partnership 2026



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Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (India) - Pakistan Forest Department

Forest Department, People's Republic of Bangladesh - Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal -

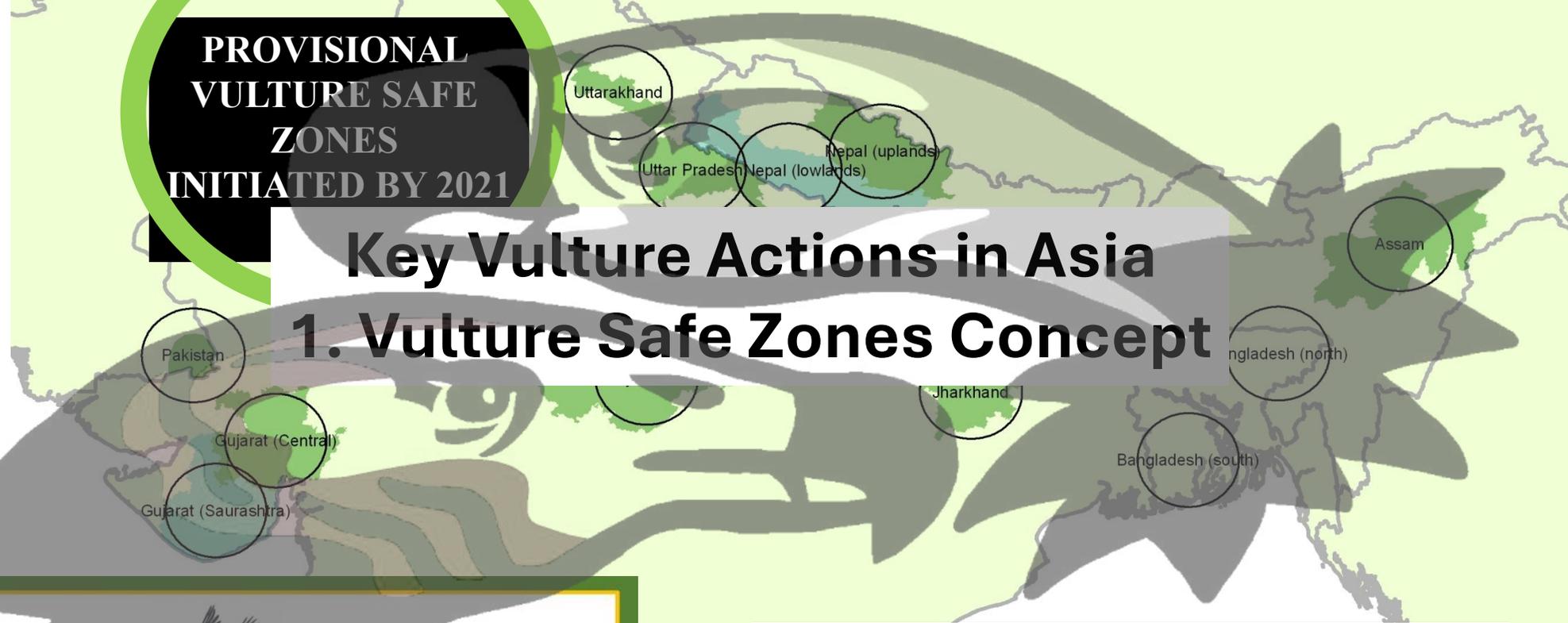
Ministry of Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries (Cambodia) - Haryana State Forest Department - West Bengal Forest Department - Assam Forest Department - Madhya Pradesh Forest Department - Central Zoo Authority (India)

Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Department, Punjab Province IUCN Bangladesh Country Office

**PROVISIONAL  
VULTURE SAFE  
ZONES  
INITIATED BY 2021**

# Key Vulture Actions in Asia

## 1. Vulture Safe Zones Concept



100km radius ie 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> !

- Contains surviving vultures within area
- Staff team dedicated to zone including coordinator, biologist and community mobiliser
- Testing of 800 cattle carcasses for NSAIDs (&/or surviving sat. tracked birds in area)

**Certification of Vulture Safe Zone**

This is to certify that the Gandaki-Lumbini Vulture Safe Zone (VSZ) in Nepal has been formally approved by the Technical Advisory Committee of SAVE following strong scientific evaluation of VSZ criteria. We therefore recommend approval of the defined areas of this VSZ being the first fully safe areas for vultures in Asia.

We congratulate Government of Nepal, Conservation Partners and Local Communities on their commendable efforts in reaching this status.

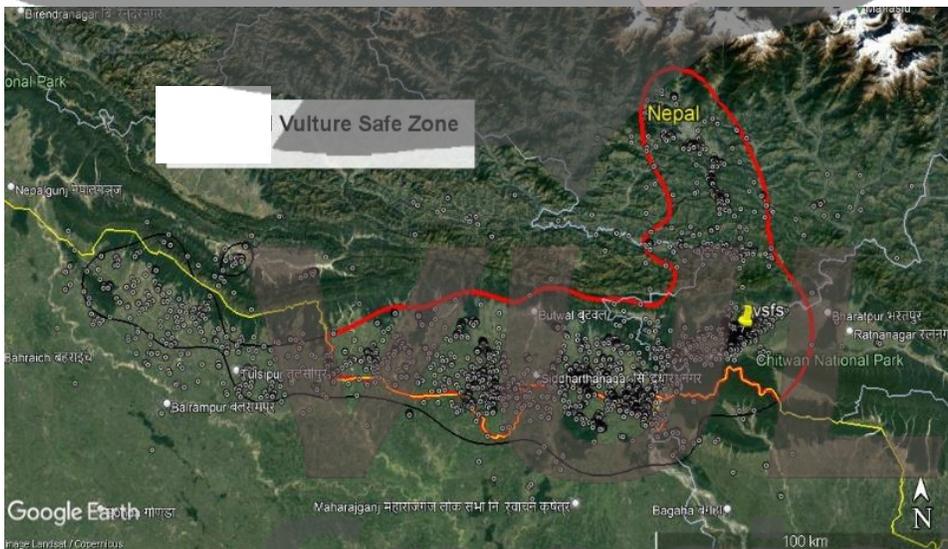
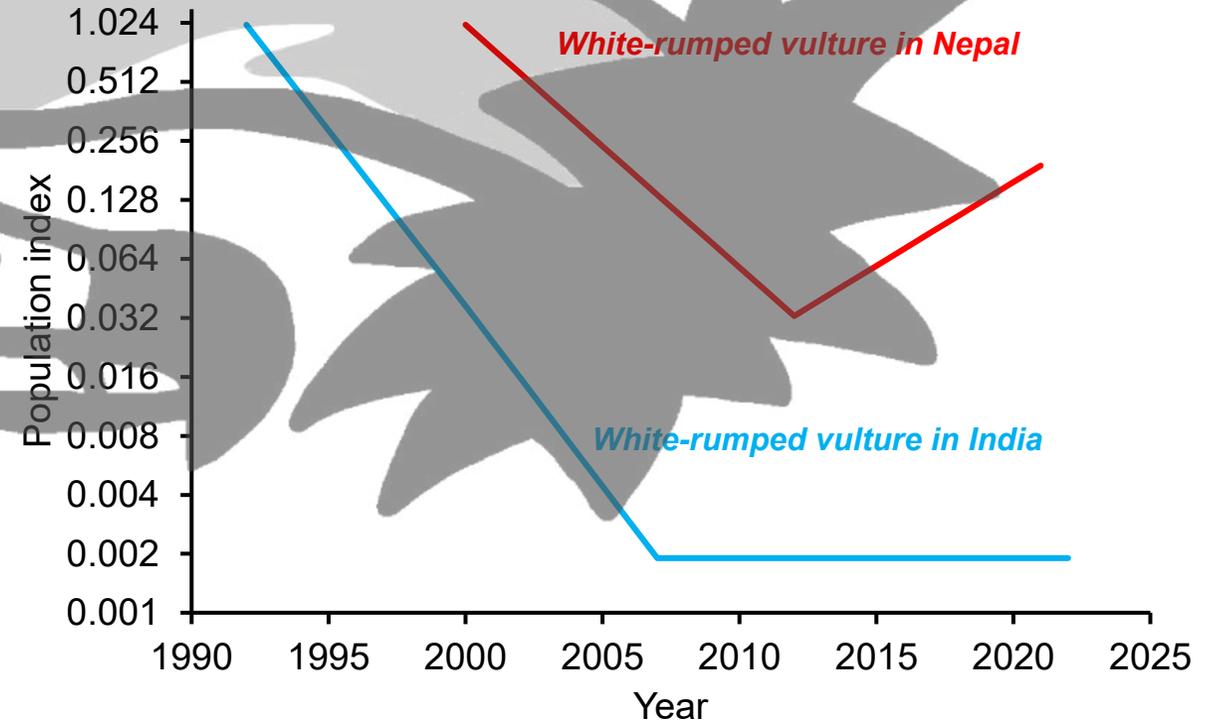
Awarded to: Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)  
National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)  
Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN)

2 December 2021

Signed: Rhys Green, SAVE Chair  
Signed: Chris Bowden, SAVE Programme Manager  
Signed: Jemima Parry-Jones, Co-chair of SAVE TAC  
Signed: Vibhu Prakash, Co Chair of SAVE TAC

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# Nepal setting Vulture Safe Zone example: Vultures Responding!



Nepal declared the first ever certified Vulture Safe Zone 2021 and is the only Asian country showing positive population trends!

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# Key Vulture Actions in Asia

## 2. Vulture Conservation Breeding Programmes



# Key Vulture Actions in Asia

## 3. Veterinary Drugs Safety-testing



Latest tests in India on paracetamol safety...  
publication soon! ?



2005

2021



& peer-review publications of results

Environmental Toxicology and Pharmacology 109 (2023) 104284

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Environmental Toxicology and Pharmacology

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/etap](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/etap)



Experimental safety testing confirms that the NSAID nimesulide is toxic to Gyps vultures in India

Karikalán Mathesh<sup>a,\*</sup>, Kesavan Manickam<sup>a</sup>, John W. Mallord<sup>b</sup>, K. Mahendran<sup>a</sup>,  
Asok Kumar M.<sup>a</sup>, Debasish Saikia<sup>a</sup>, Chandra Mohan S.<sup>a</sup>, Beena V.<sup>a</sup>, Sree Lakshmi P.<sup>a</sup>,  
Nikita Prakash<sup>a</sup>, Rohan Shringarpure<sup>a</sup>, Abhijit M. Pawde<sup>a</sup>, Rhys E. Green<sup>b,c</sup>, Vinny Naidoo<sup>d</sup>,  
Vibhu Prakash<sup>e</sup>

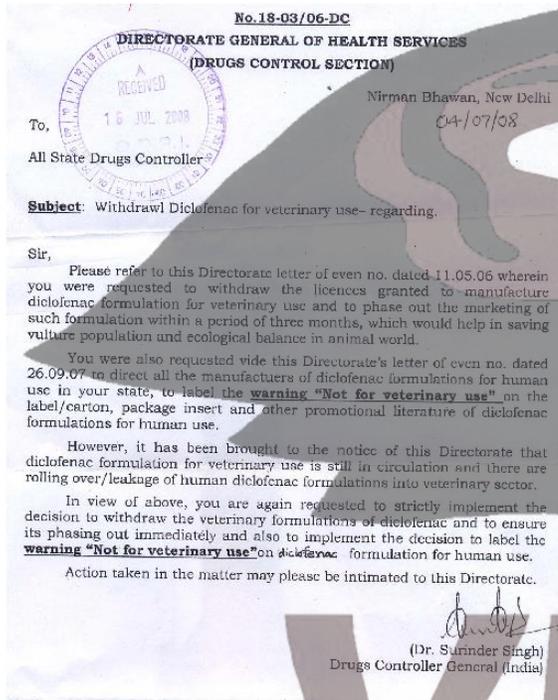


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# NSAIDs bans so far...

## Veterinary diclofenac bans:

- India, Pakistan, Nepal 2006
- Bangladesh 2010
- Iran 2016
- Cambodia 2019
- Oman 2020
- Saudi Arabia?
- Europe....?



Vet diclofenac ban, India 2006

NSAIDs NOT fully safety-tested but licensed & commonly available:

paracetamol, phenyl butazone, metamizole, piroxicam, ibuprofen  
.... (c.10 more!)

Drug name Status in India)	( +	Threat / safety
Meloxicam		Confirmed Safe
Tolfenamic acid		Confirmed Safe
Carprofen		Toxic at high doses
Flunixin		Toxic
Nimesulide		Confirmed Toxic
Aceclofenac		Confirmed toxic
Ketoprofen		Confirmed toxic
Diclofenac		Confirmed toxic
Banned Dec 2024		
Banned Aug 2023		
Banned Aug 2023		
Banned 2006		
Vial size restriction <3ml 2015		

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# Implementation Urgently Needed

## Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP14)

Urges CMS Parties and invites Parties, Signatories and non-Parties of CMS Family instruments that are **Range States of vultures and other scavenging raptors** to:

- a) **ensure safety testing of existing veterinary NSAIDs** on live, captive Old World vultures, eagles and other scavenger birds;
- b) **withdraw licensing of vulture-toxic NSAIDs** (including diclofenac) for veterinary use or implement **comprehensive risk assessment** with particular reference to known regional threats to vultures and other scavenging raptors;
- c) **ensure that safety testing on vultures of new veterinary NSAIDs** is made a **mandatory part of the protocol** of research and development and wholly financed by the pharmaceutical industry, making licensing conditional on the results of these tests; and
- d) **contribute to identification and promotion of safe alternative drugs**

Endorsed by

# Key Vulture Actions in Asia

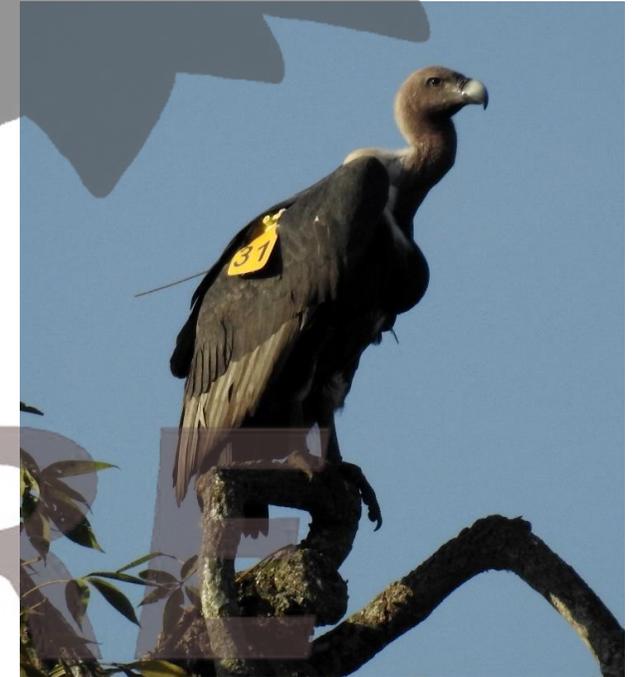
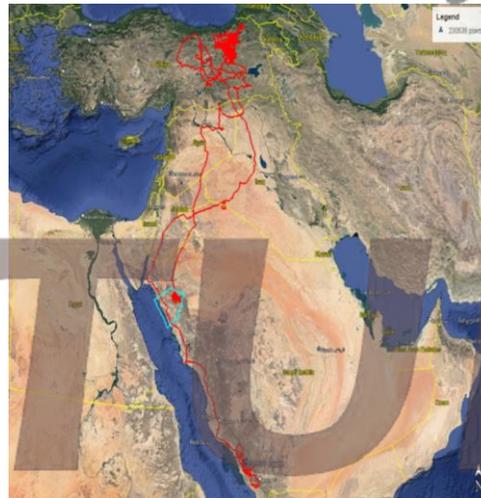
## 4. Wild Vulture Tracking/Monitoring

Key to understanding movements & mortality causes

Mongolia, South Korea, Oman, Iran, Nepal, China, Saudi Arabia...



Saudi Arabia, Oman  
(+ LfV, EV)



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## Other Major Ongoing work:

RHV Thailand

Iran EV

Illegal trade eg Lebanon

Myanmar

& new initiatives in Bhutan (Laos?)

Socotra (Yemen) EV monitoring



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# Asia Consistently hosts most IVAD Events Globally (esp India, Nepal)



# Asia Overview Takeaways



- Growing & stronger networks – (West Asia??)
- Monitoring populations (repeatable) & threats in place
- Mortality monitoring – esp. via Wild-vulture tracking (key to distinguishing less visible threats)
- Implementing/extending NSAIDs regulation
- Stronger Government support needed