

IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group

2020 Report



Chris Bowden



Andre Botha

Co-Chairs

Chris Bowden ⁽¹⁾
Andre Botha ⁽²⁾

Red List Authority Coordinator

Darcy Ogada ⁽³⁾

Location/Affiliation

- ⁽¹⁾ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy Beds SG19 2DL, UK, c/o Jakkur, Bangalore, India
- ⁽²⁾ Endangered Wildlife Trust, South Africa
- ⁽³⁾ The Peregrine Fund, Boise, Idaho, US

Number of members

120

Social networks:

Facebook: IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group
Website: www.iucnvsg.org



Mission statement

The IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group (VSG) aims to advocate and create greater awareness of the plight of vultures and coordinate and support effective conservation activities to their benefit.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Completion and planned implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP) aims to halt the decline in Old World Vulture populations in Africa-Eurasia over the next 12 years, commencing in 2018.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Research activities: publish four editions of the VSG journal *Vulture News*.

Plan

Planning: (1) engage members and others to implement the Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP) for all Old World vultures; (2) support implementation of the MsAP at a regional and sub-regional level; (3) act as a key partner in promoting the CMS Multi-species Action Plan for African-Eurasian Vultures.

Network

Membership: build and develop VSG membership.

Synergy: (1) develop links with other relevant SSC groups, e.g. Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG), African Elephant Specialist Group, Canid Specialist Group; (2) participate in and support the work of the SSC CPSG.

Communicate

Communication: (1) produce outputs from the Abu Dhabi Meeting that assist with the implementation of the Multi-species Action Plan; (2) promote International Vulture Awareness Day each September; (3) produce two newsletters annually; (4) develop VSG website presence; (5) develop a video communication tool to highlight the plight of African vultures and promote implementation of the Vulture MsAP to African governments.

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Research activities

i. Two editions of the VSG journal *Vulture News* were published, including a special edition on harnessing guidelines (Vol 78 and 78a). (KSR #28)

Plan

Planning

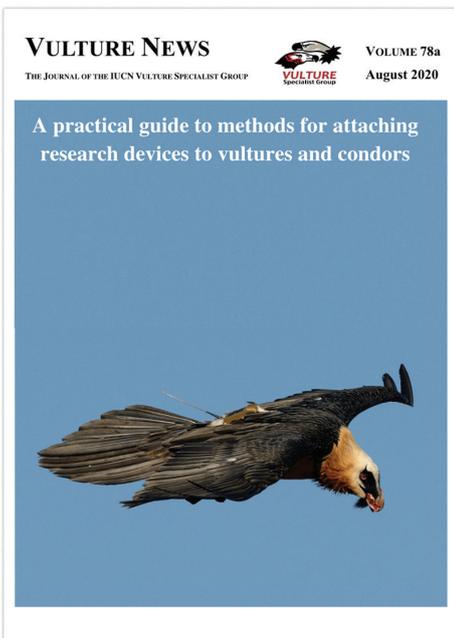
i. Nine letters of support for implementation of the Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP) at a regional and sub-regional level and one official letter were obtained. (KSR #15)



Critically Endangered California Condor, *Gymnogyps californianus*, Pinnacles National Park, California
Photo: Andre Botha



Critically Endangered Ruppell's Vulture, *Gyps rueppelli*, Tanzania
Photo: Andre Botha



IUCN SSC VSG Harnessing guide cover
Photo: IUCN SSC VSG

ii. We published guidelines for the harnessing of vultures for research purposes as a special edition of *Vulture News* (Vol 78a). (KSR #15)

iii. We continue engagement of members and others to implement the Vulture Multi-species Action Plan for all Old World vultures. (KSR #15)

iv. Promotion of the CMS Multi-species Action Plan for African-Eurasian Vultures continues. (KSR #21)

Policy

i. One position statement was developed and lodged on the VSG website. (KSR #26)

Network

Membership

i. Membership increased from 108 to 121 members.

Synergy

i. We established contact with the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group to receive assistance with the West African Vulture Strategy. (KSR #29)

ii. We engaged the Conservation Planning Specialist Group in the drafting of the West African Vulture Strategy, focused on the impact of belief-based use on vultures. (KSR #29)

Communicate

Communication

i. A total of 93 organisations from 32 countries on five continents participated in the 2020 International Vulture Awareness Day. (KSR #28)

ii. Two newsletters produced annually. (KSR #28)

iii. Website presence accomplished (www.iucnvsg.org), hosted by the Hawk Conservancy Trust. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

We would like to again thank the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Endangered Wildlife Trust for enabling the Co-Chairs to continue in their roles and allocate substantial amounts of their time to the work of the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group. Thank you also to our Steering Committee members/Regional Chairs Darcy Ogada, José Tavares, Sergio Lambertucci and Keith Bildstein for their continued support and input. Particular thanks are due to Campbell Murn who stepped down as Editor of *Vulture News* at the end of 2020 after a decade of service. We also welcomed Louis Phipps as his replacement. Further acknowledgement is due to the Hawk Conservancy Trust, especially volunteer Lesley Jerome, for their continued administrative support and for initiating work on the VSG website. We continue to work closely with a range of other organisations, but would like to acknowledge BirdLife International, Vulture Conservation Foundation, the CMS Raptors MoU and IUCN SSC staff for their continued support.

Summary of activities 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 4/5

Assess	1	
Plan	5	
Network	3	
Communicate	3	

Main KSRs addressed: 15, 21, 26, 28, 29

KSR: Key Species Result