

The Konkan Vulture Project: Vulture Food Base Trend due to Socio-Economic, Geographical and Policy Factors

Background: It has been noted that even though the northern parts of the Konkan region of Maharashtra have colonies of *Gyps bengalensis* and *Gyps indicus*, no colonies have been sighted in Southern in past 2 years. The food availability for vultures might be one of the reasons behind this decline as the state wide ban on disposing dead cattle in open is not being uniformly followed. Furthermore urbanization, lowered numbers of cattle, selling of weak cattle to slaughter houses may also affect food availability. Therefore an extensive study is required to draw a clear picture about the availability of food for the existing vulture population.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze effect of socio-economic, geographical conditions, carcass disposal state policies and their implementations on vulture food base and existence of vulture colonies.
- Create action areas to establish vulture safe Konkan

CURRENT UPDATE (JAN – MAR 2015)

- 38 places where dead carcasses are dumped in open are being monitored on regular basis with the help of locally appointed people. Out of these 6 villages have vulture colonies.
- In addition to the vulture colonies, vultures have been sighted feeding at Gothe Group

Gram Panchayat (common administrative body of five adjacent villages), Devhare Group Gram Panchayat (common administrative body of six adjacent villages), Kangavai and Sukondi.

- Meetings have been conducted at these places encouraging locals to be more vigilant to gather information about any vulture sighting and most importantly not to use diclofenac in cattle treatment. Local governing bodies are being pursued to fence the carcass dumping place to keep stray dogs away and also prevent botulism. Carcass dumping guidelines prepared as a part of CEPF project have also been given to local governing bodies.
- So far no vultures have been sighted at carcass dumping places in mid and southern district Ratnagiri and district Sindhudurga.
- Regular line of communication has been maintained with locally appointed people monitoring carcass dumping grounds.

NEXT QUARTER (APR – JUN 2015)

- Plan a Workshop to present findings with Forest Department, Animal Husbandry Department and other related NGOs.
- On-going communication and monitoring of locally appointed people.