



## **Vulture updates No 11 - October 2019 - Around the World of Vultures & VSG activities**

**Overview:** Headlines included the appalling mortality event in Botswana, a major vulture meeting in Europe, a veterinary diclofenac ban in Cambodia, and VSG's first ever workshop to highlight and provide guidance on harnessing best practice. Outcomes from the CITES CoP in Switzerland could be significant too. We are now almost ready to launch the long-awaited VSG website, where we can already start to bring resources together, including 'Vulture News', the outputs from key workshops, as well as things like an agreed position statement clarifying what we do (and don't!) know on the role vultures play in preventing disease transmission.

VSG has never had the opportunity to convene a meeting, but the VSG Co-chairs were both able to attend and lead an interactive session at the recent European vultures meeting to invite suggestions on developing the scope and activities of VSG. We will circulate a summary of this, but welcome further suggestions - but do keep in mind that we don't currently have resources beyond what members and others can provide with their own time and support. One addition we want to provide is an updated list of recent peer-reviewed publications, and we are currently looking at the best way to provide this.

**Global:** At the August **CITES CoP18** meeting in Switzerland, Governments and experts of over 180 countries met, and Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal Governments highlighted the critical situation of 6 species of West African vultures and raised for the first time the apparent need to enforce stronger trade restrictions. A mandate was given to form a CITES Vulture Working Group to research the extent of trade and develop and implement relevant policies to ensure any population level impact is minimised. VSG & BirdLife International hosted a vultures side event with key participation of ECOWAS, CMS, IUCN, CITES, & the African Union, plus attendees from TRAFFIC, US Fish and Wildlife Service and many more.. VSG Co-chairs attended the SSC gathering of chairs in October, to increase connectivity with other Specialist Groups - one output of the meeting was the [Abu Dhabi Call for Global Species Conservation Action](#).

VSG hosted its first ever workshop in August, together with the SAVE Partnership, and with support from Global Wildlife Conservation, RSPB, ICBP and 7 tagging companies. The need to highlight **best-practice methodology for tagging/harnessing** vultures was recognised as a priority by VSG and the extensive outputs of this meeting of 30 experts will be made available within a few weeks. Details of the meeting [here](#). A [paper](#) of wider interest reviews the geographical scope of threats to all old world vultures.

**International Vulture Awareness Day (IVAD)** – Participation [this September](#) climbed to new heights, with a 25% increase from 2018, to 137 participating organisations registered from 38 countries across five continents. An extra 27 organisations signed up from a broad range of organisations including conservation organisations, universities, nature reserves, state parks, wildlife parks, zoos and museums. USA had the highest number of participant organisations (29), followed by India, UK and Spain. Countries participating for the first time included Syria, Albania, Argentina, China, Ethiopia, Latvia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Rwanda and Serbia! African countries were among the welcome increase with 21 events/ organisations from 9

different countries. IVAD activities ranged from presentations, discussions and a huge range of awareness and educational activities. Many attracted media attention, with radio, press and TV coverage, and many involved viewing wild vultures in their natural habitat.

**Asia Round-up:** The **Cambodia** Vulture Working Group found veterinary diclofenac being sold and used for the first time in 2018, and following various meetings and followup, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries [announced a national veterinary diclofenac ban](#) with immediate effect exactly one year later in July 2019! This fast reaction is a great example for others. Less positive is the ongoing vulture population gradual declines being reported in the country, and as highlighted in the [MsAP, other threats including poison-baits](#) predominate in SE Asia. The newly formed **Myanmar** Vulture Working Group has been meeting and developing links with Government including the Veterinary department. Surveys and national monitoring is now underway. Highly significant news from **Nepal** is that white-rumped vulture populations there are significantly recovering [based on extensive annual road transect surveys](#) carried out by BCN, and that these directly relate to the removal of diclofenac and the Vulture Safe Zone approach. Related to this, the released birds in Nepal are faring well, with no NSAIDs-related deaths so far, and tagging of wild birds which range much further is showing good survival, including one that went much further (see [updates here](#)). A further 13 birds were tagged [and released 19 October](#), a mix of captive-bred and captive reared birds, joining the wild population close to Chitwan National Park. In **India**, there was a meeting called by the Ministry in September to draft an update to the 2006 [National Vulture Action Plan](#). This update will be more detailed with timelines and will hopefully be finalised ahead of the [13<sup>th</sup> CMS CoP](#) which India hosts in Gujarat in February, and where there are vulture side events being planned. Release plans for the first captive-bred white-rumped vultures in Haryana, **India** are progressing for early 2020, and preliminary release of surrogate species, Himalayan Griffons are also planned, for West Bengal. Satellite transmitters and permissions are now in place for these to proceed, and test the safety of the environment. Veterinary drug safety-testing by Indian Veterinary Research Institute has progressed and hopefully, for one drug, tolfenamic acid, there may be good news of a second vulture-safe drug in addition to meloxicam for vets to use. One additional SAVE [Partner was nominated, Neo Human Foundation](#), from Jharkhand, India - which has led important Vulture Safe Zone work since inception in the region. Sampling of cattle carcasses for NSAIDs in **Bangladesh** has proved a challenge, but some important progress has been made. The SAVE Annual meeting is near Pinjore, India, 4-6 Nov, so we await further updates of the regional Blueprint Recovery Plan from that. SAVE for the first time had a [stand at the UK BirdFair](#) in Aug, raising the Asian vulture profile and adding 80 addresses to the VSG newsletter mailing list! A survey of bone flutes in western **China** showed that vulture bones are widely used in Xinjiang and Tibet. At least 11 regions or cities in 2019 have bone flutes for sale in the tourist markets, and prices can be over 1,000 US dollars. The flutes are made from vulture bone, and often regarded as cultural heritage (Ma et al., 2010). There may be similarities to the ivory trade, posing a threat to vulture populations. There is public promotion, exhibition, trading and online sales, even though this is apparently illegal. There have been recent examples reported where villagers obtained vulture bones through poisoning.

**Middle East:** In **Oman** eight resident Egyptian vultures are being tracked, and one in southern **Iran**. Most, if not all, held territories in 2019 and despite no formal analyses on the data, it is clear that landfill sites are important, as they visit them on almost a daily basis. Using the tracking data as a framework for searches, a 2 week field survey was carried out for breeding EVs. An impressive 61 occupied territories were located within a 40 km radius of the main landfill, and with extrapolation, 240 territories are estimated in mainland **Oman**! In addition, 60+ territories were found on Masirah Island in 2013 so the published national estimate of 100 breeding pairs apparently needs updating. Meetings with the company in charge of upgrading waste management in Oman at the national scale are planned, and they seem interested in giving more consideration to scavenging birds (both vultures and eagles). Further plans include establishing vulture restaurants at landfills (safe food and tourism opportunities), and funding a studentship at Sultan Qaboos University. This EV [paper](#) summarises some of the above points. The **Socotra** UNE-GEF team (Yemen) has established that there are 1,900 EVs on the island, making this potentially the highest density of the species anywhere. A full report will soon be available (by *Ahmed Saeed Suliaman*) with details regarding threats, and measures being taken to secure this population. Meanwhile on mainland **Yemen**, veterinary diclofenac

formulations are now known to be in regular circulation which is now being looked at for a potential ban, and the Director of Agriculture is taking this forward for Socotra meanwhile. The 2019 [Sariamzi Raptor Count](#) in **Turkey**, where [hundreds of Egyptian vultures \(EV\) pass through](#) during a one month period, started in early September, coordinated by [Doğa Derneği](#). Daily observations available [online](#). An [EV confiscated from a private zoo was released](#) into the wild in **Jordan** thanks to collaboration between the [RSCN](#) and Al Ma'wa for nature and wildlife. The bird had been captured from the wild and kept in a local zoo with minimal facilities, but it recovered, was named 'Wesal' and satellite tagged - [its daily movements can be followed online](#). In March by the Dead Sea, **Jordan**, a [Regional Energy & Birds Workshop](#) brought together 37 institutions and organizations. The event, hosted by the [Safe Flyways Energy Project](#) in cooperation with [Migratory Soaring Birds project - Phase II](#) and the [Egyptian Vulture New LIFE project](#). The focus was to review the situation of power infrastructure development in the Mediterranean region, Middle East and Africa and how its impact is being minimized and managed. Vultures featured prominently among other raptors. More than 2,6 million migratory birds of 140 species, including raptors, and EV, are [indiscriminately killed each year](#) in **Lebanon**. Two of the most important migratory bird corridors pass through the country, but the widespread illegal killing poses a serious threat. Campaigns by local NGOs, eg [SPNL](#), are gaining strength to enforce government hunting regulations, and conduct awareness campaigns among locals. Some important initiatives in **Iran** are establishing a power infrastructure threats to raptors committee, and informal checks were made on the NSAIDs being used by vets across the country. The good news is that the veterinary diclofenac ban has been fully effective so far, and meloxicam is quite popular as an alternative. However, flunixin and ketoprofen are also widely used, and carprofen is being tested for the market too – all of these are known to be toxic.

**Africa Round-up:** VSG and partners developed a spectacular **awareness video** with help of Cornell Lab of Ornithology, highlighting the urgent need to conserve African vultures and implement the CMS Vulture MsAP. Released in July in four languages, the film is free for all to use – please do: YouTube links here to [English](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#) and [Spanish](#) versions – Enjoy - and do show to respective governments! A letter signed by 87 Africa-based organisations including VSG was sent to the Chair of the **African Union Commission** on in July. It raises concerns about the recent spate of wildlife poisoning events (see below) across Africa.

**Major mortality incidents:** A truly shocking 537 vultures were poisoned by elephant poachers in a single incident in June in the Eastern Central District Wildlife Management Area of **Botswana**. Three elephant carcasses were laced with poison, affecting five species - 468 White-backed Vultures, 28 Hooded, 17 White-headed, 14 Lappet-faced and 10 Cape Vultures. A second major incident (also apparently sentinel poaching), in July involved 119 vultures found by [South African National Parks](#) rangers next to a poached buffalo in the Vlakteplaas section of [Kruger NP, South Africa](#). [SANParks](#) reported that the poachers had removed meat from the buffalo before lacing the remaining carcass with poison. 117 White-backed, one Hooded and one White-headed vultures died, but [Kruger National Park](#) rangers arrested nine alleged poachers over the following days (in three places), all with heavy-calibre hunting rifles, ammunition and poaching equipment. Another 50 vultures died in the Awgu area of Enugu State, **Nigeria** in July, probably also a poison-bait incident, although diclofenac has not been ruled out – the [birds had apparently](#) fed on a slaughtered cow. More information [here](#). The events above prompted BirdLife Botswana to convened a **strategic workshop** in July at Kasane in N **Botswana** for the KAZA-region, with Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa represented. A draft regional wildlife poisoning strategy was initiated which will include wildlife poisoning response training targeted at first responders to poisoning incidents and the first is planned for November 2019. In response to the Kruger incident in **South Africa** a similar response was instigated. The Endangered Wildlife Trust, in partnership with the Hawk Conservancy Trust, issued 23 wildlife poisoning response kits to rangers on the ground.

**Southern Africa:** Zimbabwe became the first sub-Saharan African country to publish its government-endorsed **Zimbabwe Vulture Action Plan** 2018-2022 in May. The process was driven by BirdLife Zimbabwe following a 2013 workshop initiating the process. **South Africa** also made good progress with its own national vulture conservation strategy and a first draft being reviewed through an October 2019 workshop. The concept of **Vulture Safe Zones** is taking off in South Africa with two VSZs being launched at IVAD events. SANParks, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and other partners launched the [Karoo Vulture Safe Zone](#) Project and BirdLife South Africa announced the establishment of the [Tswalu Vulture Safe Zone](#). These are further to VSZ initiatives in Zambia and a concept being developed in Botswana. Fledged **Cape vulture** chicks in the Tswapong Hills region of eastern **Botswana** showed signs of bone deformities due to lack of calcium. Provision of bone fragments around a water point has attracted birds to feed in an initiative of BirdLife Botswana and the Moremi Gorge Trust. Other awareness events were carried out in SW Botswana. Road counts were started by Rochelle Mphethe in southern Botswana following on Rebecca Garbett's work in the north. The Biodiversity Management Plan for **Bearded Vulture** (gazetted through South African legislation in 2014) was recently revised and aligned with the Multi Species Action Plan for African Vultures. One Bearded Vulture fitted with a tracking device in 2010 and two fitted in 2012 are still providing movements data. Two of these were caught as adults, the third is now also adult and is establishing a territory, in an area previously not used by breeding birds. The Bearded Vulture Breeding Programme established in 2015 as part of the greater Bearded Vulture Recovery Programme has successfully added four chicks (collected from the harvest of second eggs in the wild) to the programme in 2019. The programme is managed by Shannon Hoffman and now has 9 individuals (including one adult).

**East Africa:** In northern **Kenya** The Peregrine Fund's Coexistence Co-op Project continues to engage at grass-roots level to stop poisoning through awareness and reducing carnivore conflict by training communities how to improve their livestock corrals (bomas) - see this [video](#). Over the past two years >1500 people have been trained, generating very positive engagement. In addition, community and tourist camps are subject of work to prevent rock-climbers disturbing sensitive areas for Rüppell's Vultures. 'Strategic Environmental Assessment for Wind Power and Biodiversity in Kenya' was also completed to advise developers. Rüppell's Vulture colonies were also recently counted by aerial surveys which will allow a full national population estimate. Southern **Tanzania** Vulture Project (N Carolina Zoo) has continued road transect surveys and currently has 19 tagged vultures across the landscape. In addition, a 2-day training on Response to Poisoning events (co-funded by FZS) trained 54 rangers and ecologists (50 from Selous Game Reserve, and 3 from the adjacent Mikumi NP and Wami Mbiki). Training consisted of improving understanding of 1) the importance of vultures, their current status and threats, 2) what to do in the event of a poisoning event, including area search protocol and filling in a poisoning incident form (data collection / evidence), 3) how to deal with sick but live birds, 4) how to take samples from carcasses to test for the type of poison used (especially if a vet is not present to do this), and 5) safe disposal of the carcasses to prevent secondary poisoning occurring. The training put into immediate practice due to the mortality of a tagged white-backed vultures which led rangers to a bushmeat poaching site, using long wire snare lines - 10 vultures and a hyena were found dead. Samples were taken and will help PA staff identify the poison and build a case. [Ethiopian Wildlife & Natural History Society](#) (EWNHS) and External ornithological experts from **Ethiopia** - Afar and Oromia region - conducted field surveys for dead birds along powerlines, counted vultures at congregation points, and conducted questionnaires with rural livestock holders. This allowed assessments of the magnitude of direct poisoning (eg through use of strychnine to control stray dogs) in settlements in the [Balkan EV flyway](#) project area. Electrocution and collision with power infrastructure was identified as a major threat on most of the regions. Reduced food availability as a result of invasion by the *Prosopis juliflora* greatly reducing grazing lands for livestock appears to be a major threat in the dry regions of Oromia. To improve the level of awareness on vultures in Ethiopia, 42 rangers from Awash and Alydege National Parks were trained in vulture identification, ecosystem value of vultures and threats facing the

vultures in Africa. 16 vultures have been GPS tagged in **Ethiopia** over the past year: 9 White-backed, 3 Rueppell's, 2 Hooded, and 2 Lappet-faced vultures to determine movements, ecology, habitat use, human commensalism, and areas for conservation actions. An ecological study using camera traps and scavenger exclusions was also initiated to investigate how much different scavenger species contribute to carrion consumption. Some related recent [publications here](#) & [here](#)

**West Africa:** NATURAMA (BL Partner in **Burkina Faso**) produced 'peril of the vulture' awareness videos in [French](#) and [English](#). In **the Gambia**, replication of [earlier year-round](#) surveys along four routes 14 years on are so far suggesting considerable increases in Hooded vultures. Additionally, regular coordinated counts in 2019 at 10 HV feeding sites showed between 588 – 1067 HVs on the same day. In **Ghana**, one new Masters project, focusing on Mole NP is "Establishing vulture monitoring protocols for PAs in Ghana". A study of local attitudes in Ghana was [published](#) in BCI, and following a meeting at [APLORI](#), a research team was formed to coordinate vulture research in the region. A recent [paper](#) from Nigeria on HV was also published. In October 2018, [APLORI](#) carried out a [survey of dangerous power lines](#) in Yobe state, **Nigeria**, to evaluate the magnitude of this threat to the wintering Egyptian vultures and other scavengers. No dead vultures were found, but this may be due to low densities. In the spring 2019, the [NCF](#) held an [event to urge stakeholders](#) to conserve wetlands and protect the iconic species like the Egyptian vulture. Based on the [overall analysis of threats to vultures](#) in **Niger**, the major problem identified was **illegal killing**. Indeed, during its field missions in Zinder and Maradi regions, the [SCF](#) had found cases of vultures, [including Egyptian vultures](#), which have been poached and sold at fetish markets. In order to develop efficient measures to tackle this problem in Niger, the SCF continues to research this complex issue.

**European Round-up:** The period was dominated by the [European Vulture Conference](#) which brought over 250 experts together in October. This event and many of the talks brought a new level of connectivity and updates, and although there will no full proceedings, you can access the abstracts book and program [here](#).

**Egyptian Vulture (EV):** [Results from monitoring](#) of EV 2019 breeding territories in the **Balkans** showed substantial population declines since 2012 - occupied territories decreased by 32% (74 to 51) & the number of pairs decreased by 37 % (71 to 45). **Bulgaria** is the regional stronghold with 24 breeding pairs. Unfortunately in **Greece** after two years of stability, the population dropped to a historical low with only three pairs left plus two territories occupied by single males. Local anti-poison networks in Greece, maintained by HOS and WWF Greece, are growing. Apart of distributing [tool kits](#) and [relevant equipment](#) (e.g. [freezers](#) to store poisoned animals and baits found until toxicological analysis) to the relevant authorities, alternative methods to mitigate the human carnivore conflict (eg [electric fences](#), fladry and local guarding shepherd dogs) are being trialed. 'A Mile for the Egyptian Vulture' is an international campaign supporting EVs in their difficult migratory journey through running events along its flyway. In the spring of 2019 the campaign took place in **Greece** ([Koziakas Mountain Race](#); [video](#)) and **North Macedonia** ([The Skopje Marathon 2019](#); [video](#)). Other major public EV events in the Balkans took place in [Sofia Zoo](#) and [Familatlon Feast](#) in **Bulgaria**, [Meteora](#) and [Zagori](#) in Greece. **Greece continues for 7th consecutive year** with activities held with [four primary schools](#). [Similar Educational workshops](#), [environmental education](#) and [awareness](#) activities were held in Thessaly and Epirus by HOS/BirdLife Greece, with the participation of more than 900 school pupils, members of the "Egyptian Vulture Student Task Force". The number of occupied territories in **Albania** is nine (five are occupied by pairs and four by single birds). So far 13 breeding territories are recorded in **North Macedonia**, of which 9 are incubating pairs. For the 7th consecutive year, an EV [nest](#) has been live-streamed through [several trail cameras](#) and nest guarding undertaken by devoted volunteers: 16 fledglings (53% of the national productivity) were guarded and successfully fledged. The **Experimental Restocking Programme** of EV in **Bulgaria** continued in 2019 using three different releasing methods - [delayed release](#), [hacking and fostering](#). One of the delayed released birds in 2018, which spent the winter in Crete, [returned to the releasing site in Bulgaria](#). The [Egyptian](#)

[Vulture New LIFE](#) project, together with the EAZA EEP led by [Prague Zoo](#), continued to establish a **Balkan EV Captive Breeding Pool** with the aim of releasing in the Balkans in future. One stronghold of this pool is the Green Balkans' [Wildlife Rehabilitation and Breeding Centre](#) (WRBC) in Stara Zagora, where [two EV pairs](#) successfully [bred](#) this year, raising [three chicks](#) (two of them [released later into the wild](#)). In August 3 EVs from the WRBC [were donated](#) to EAZA and one bird to [Attica Zoo](#). Several [exchange visits](#) also took place in WRBC. **Albania** has been among the 10 Mediterranean countries worst hit by the [illegal killing of birds](#) with 270 thousand birds shot annually during 2004-2014. Vultures, although a rarity in the country, have often been subject of poisoning, trapping and poaching with evidence collected even in recent years. An [estimation](#) made by the [AOS](#) in 2018 shows that at least 1-3 individuals of vultures are killed annually. The [AOS organized an event \[video\]](#) dedicated to the World Migratory Bird Day to raise public awareness on migratory birds, and especially for EV (locally called cuckoo's horse!). "[2 Days Vulturing](#)" event was organized in Aug by [AOS](#) aiming to directly show the last Cuckoo's Horses to some key stakeholders, among whom the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Environment. The event was huge success, and even the Prime Minister shared some posts and conservation messages about the EV on his own Facebook profile. Since May 2019, [two supplementary feeding stations are operating](#) in Albania under the coordination of [PPNEA](#) (one near Glina constructed in 2017, and one near Nivica, constructed in July 2018) and [for the first time they seem to be quite efficient](#) in supporting the near-by Egyptian vulture pairs with supplementary food.

**Cinereous Vulture (CV):** Two of the three first ever released CVs in Bulgaria - Boyan and Riga are still alive, but did not return to the release site in Kotel Mountain, so far. Boyan did not manage to cross the Dardanells during its spring migration and remained in Turkey (Between Eskishehir, Balu and Kutahya) for the summer. Riga made a loop suggesting it may return to Kotel Mountain but after visiting some more vulture places in Balkans (Eastern Rhodopes and dadia in Bulgaria and Cres and Krk Islands in Croatia, then Italy and Switzerland) it spent most of the summer in the Austrian Alps in the Hohe Tauren National Park! Within LIFE14NAT/BG/649, 11 more CVs were [released in March](#). By [April](#) and May 2019 all had adapted well and are attached to the release site in Kotel Mountain and Sinite Kamani Nature Park in **Bulgaria**. In July and Aug, 4 chicks were released by hacking method, coming from European Zoos (Plackendael, Des Oiseaux, Zlin and Ostrava) within EAZA's EEP. Three of them adapted well and joined the group of 11. Ten more CV were [brought to Bulgaria from Extremadura](#) for release in 2020.

A new poisoning episode was detected by GPS tracked **Griffon Vultures (GV)** near Vrchanski Balkan Nature Park in September 2019. A golden eagle and at least [5 GV were found](#), but there were probably more. Despite this, the Vrachanski Balkan NP colony remains [stable with 60-70 birds and 11 chicks](#) fledged - a record since the reintroduction in 2010. Also a record reported from Kotel Mountain with 8 fledglings. In April a GV named Nelson tagged in **Bulgaria** was captured in **Yemen** and [kept prisoner by local militia](#) believing it to be a spy. The case was solved thanks to international and local activists, but in the end the bird was unable to fly due to gunshot wounds. Updates for **Bearded Vulture** will be covered in more detail next newsletter, or see [VCF](#) website. The Annual [BV Meeting](#) will be held in Andorra in November.

**North American Round-up:** The California condor management and research community came together for a research planning meeting in March. A conservation research action plan was developed identifying key areas of conservation priority research. These come under four broad categories - demography, social science, wildlife health and information management – and have already led to collaborative grant proposals on each of these topics.

**South America Round-up:** Previous newsletters reported multiple cases of Andean condors poisoned, and unfortunately these have not stopped. New events include up to 6 individuals poisoned at a carcass in Patagonia, **Argentina**. Condors were found with fractured bones, lead poisoning and other unspecific health

problems in Argentina since March. Similar events occurred in other South American countries. Another condor mortality was registered in August in Santa Cruz province, Patagonia, Argentina. This is the same area where a year ago 10 condors were poisoned. 6 recent condors died with carbofuran confirmed. In **Ecuador**, between Dec 2018 and May 2019, four events of Andean Condor mortalities were recorded in the Central Andean region: three from poisoning and one from hunting. The bodies of two dead individuals were located, one of them an adult female (named Ami), satellite tagged by The Peregrine Fund in 2015. The organophosphate agro-toxic was confirmed in lab tests. Fundacion Cóndor Andino and The Peregrine Fund rescued two condors from the poisoning events and one was successfully rehabilitated, tagged and re-released. It is estimated that between Dec 2018 and May 2019, 15-20 condors were killed from poisoning and hunting, that's about 10% of the estimated Ecuador Andean Condor population (150 condors) based on the second national census of the species carried out in September 2018. A [recent review on vulture poisoning](#) highlights that this is a widely distributed problem worldwide, with South America as one of the hotspots for this problem. In November 2019 the [Third South American Condor Conference](#) will take place in Colombia involving specialists from Europe, USA, and South America.. A [recent study](#) done across the entire American continent showed that Turkey Vulture populations may reach 13 million birds in America, and removing almost 1,5 billion kg of organic material from the environment. This highlights the ecosystem service they are providing to humans, valued at 700 million USD per year globally.

Editor of Vulture News, the VSG Journal [Campbell Murn](#) can be contacted for any queries about submissions, back issues or other points related to the journal. Reminder that [Vulture News including back copies is available free](#) online.

Let us know if you receive this newsletter indirectly and wish to be added to the circulation list.



**Chris Bowden**  
[chris.bowden@rspb.org.uk](mailto:chris.bowden@rspb.org.uk)

**André Botha**  
[andreb@ewt.org.za](mailto:andreb@ewt.org.za)

**Co-chairs: Vulture Specialist Group, IUCN Species Survival Commission**

**Editor & Asia:** Chris Bowden

**African Regional Co-chair:** Darcy Ogada

**European Regional Co-chair:** José Tavares

**America Regional Co-chairs :** **North America:** Keith Bildstein **Latin America:** Sergio Lambertucci

**Editor Vulture News:** Campbell Murn

**VSG Admin Assistant:** Lesley Jerome

**Additional contributions:** Socotra UNE-GEF Conservation team, Samuel Bakari, Glyn Maude, Roller Ma Ming, McGrady M.J., Emilian Stoyanov, Stoyan Nikolov, Justus Deikumah, Esther Nosazeogie, Andrea Santangeli, Clive Barlow, Evan Buechley, Alireza Hashemi, Mahnoud Marashi, Beckie Garbett, Corinne J. Kendall, Hernán Vargas, Fabricio Narváez, Hannah Shaw, Todd Katzner, M. McGrady, B. Meyburg, I. Angelov, M. Schultze, C. Bougain, F. Al Lamki, A. Spalton, M. Sarrouf-Wilson.