

Vulture worries stalk activists on Uttarayan

Anon.

Ahmedabad – When kites take to the skies on Uttarayan, animal activists will be biting their nails in apprehension. Their main concern is the White-rumped Vulture, a highly endangered species, of which only 137 birds are left in the city, according to figures of the Animal Help Foundation. There is still one more day to go for Uttarayan and already 89 birds have been injured by the deadly manja. Six of these were White-rumped Vultures, of which two died. “Vultures, eagles, owls and hawks are the main species that worry us during the kiteflying season. Of these, the White-rumped Vultures are the most important, as they are on the verge of extinction,” said Sohan Mukherjee of Animal Help Foundation, which is readying itself with a team of foreign doctors to treat the birds injured during Uttarayan. Volunteers of the Animal Help Foundation said that out of 1157 birds injured during the last kite-flying season, 24 were White-rumped Vultures. “We could not save two, as they succumbed to injuries before we could bring them to the hospital” they said. But this time around, Mukherjee is armed

with a team of doctors from abroad. “We have got three doctors from the United Kingdom, one from Sri Lanka and one from Asia’s oldest wildlife conservation organization, the Bombay Natural History Society,” added Mukherjee. After treating the injured vultures, they are sent to a vulture captive breeding programme in Pinjore, near Chandigarh. Apart from vultures, migratory birds like flamingos, cranes, storks and pelicans are also cause of concern for the Foundation. Mukherjee said that they have opened 12 injured bird collection centres in the city, from where they volunteers will collect the injured birds during Uttarayan. “The centres will be functioning near Gayatri Mandir in Shahibaug, near Torrent power house in Sabarmati, Vastrapur, near Panjra Pol in Ambawadi, at Kankaria zoo, Rasala garden near Law garden, Geeta Bhavan in Manek chowk, near Odhav Panjra Pol, near Bal krida Ghar Paldi, Sundervan nature park in Satellite, JG International school on Sola road and near Radio Mirchi in Vejalpur,” added Mukherjee.

From: ***The Times of India***

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Ahmedabad/Vulture_worries_stalk_activists_on_Uttarayan/articleshow/1173808.cms

14 January 2007