

Project Update: September 2015

In September 2015, a team consisting of members from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Raptor Rescue Rehabilitation Centre, and the Colleywobbles community literally scaled cliffs and climbed mountains to aid in the conservation of the endangered Cape vulture. The mission was to place GPS transmitters on Cape vulture nestlings at the Colleywobbles colony as part of ongoing research on the movement ecology of Cape Vultures in the Eastern Cape Province. SAFRING metal rings, yellow patagial wing tags, and cellular-based GPS transmitters were successfully deployed on nine nestlings. Measurements, photographs, and two drops of blood for DNA material and avian sexing were taken. Data on the vulture's movement (including flight height) will be used in defining conservation buffers for use in power line and wind energy development."



Left: The children pose for a picture with a live vulture. Each child got to touch the Cape vulture nestling. © Camille Fritsch. Right: Fellow PhD candidate Vuyisile Thabethe fits a patagial wing tag to a Cape vulture nestling. © Camille Fritsch.



Left: Morgan Pfeiffer fits a metal SAFRING band to the leg of a Cape Vulture nestling with guidance from fellow PhD candidate Shane McPherson. © Camille Fritsch. Right: The man in the striped shirt is Ndalo, the chief of the area. He has supported my research in the area. © Camille Fritsch.



After processing, the Cape Vulture nestling was placed back on the nest. The following day, we observed the majority of the Cape Vulture adults tending to the tagged chicks. © Hallam Payne.