

Project Update: March 2018

During the field visit to Dhorfirdi in March 2018, following activities were conducted:

1. Population count.
2. Behavior study.
3. Consultation meeting.

1. Population count

As per the information obtained from the local people in Dhorfirdi, most vultures were found from February to April. Also, this is the breeding season of vultures. Thus, the population count of the vulture was conducted at this time. The population count was conducted along the Millennium Trekking Route (MTR) i.e. Rastal, Giddhabase, Kharbari, Bajasthala, Dhorbarahi temple in Dhorfirdi using a transect walk. The count was conducted using binoculars, cameras, GPS and checklists. During the transect walk, GPS coordinates of the vulture sightings along the MTR were noted

The population count of vultures was conducted from morning to evening. A checklist was developed (Table 1). In order to avoid duplication, population counts were conducted at the same time in different sites.

During the transect survey along the MTR, vultures were sighted at Bajasthala, Kharbari and Gurдум. Nesting sites were found at Kharbari (Kafaldanda-Bhardanda Community Forest, initially named as Tinkhole Ban by the local people before it was declared as community forest).

The maximum population along MTR in Dhorfirdi was 30 with a minimum of six. Altogether, six species of vultures were observed during the transect survey, red-headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), Himalayan griffon (*Gyps himalayensis*), Eurasian griffon (*Gyps fulvus*) and slender-billed vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*).

2. Behavior study

Daytime behaviour

Vultures were observed in a Simal tree at Magarnas, Gurдум. Their population and daytime behaviour was noted. Different behaviours such as feeding, resting, sunning, scratching, fight, flight, wing flap, sleep, groom, etc. were noted.

Nesting behaviour

Red-headed vultures were observed in the nest at Kafaldanda-Bhardanda Community Forest. Thus, their nesting behavior was noted. An egg was found to be incubated by two vultures alternately one after another. For noting the behaviour of vultures, a format was developed (Table 2).

3. Consultation meeting

A consultation meeting was conducted with the local people along the MTR at Dhorfirdi where people were informed about the activities that has been carried out till now. Also, they were informed about the capacity building training and workshop that will be conducted in the future. Information were collected on the status of vulture population in the area.



Left: Observation of vulture at Kharbari, Dhorfirdi. Right: Data collection.



Red-headed vulture in nest

