

Project Update: April 2010

1. Inception programme organised

An inception workshop was organized at Rupandehi on 5th March 2010 in the presence of government officials, reporters and local partner organization to highlight the major facets of the project. Dr. Surya Paudel from BCN presented the major concept, need and roles of various partners to create a favorable legal environment for declaring 'Diclofenac Free Zones' followed by active discussion. All 15 participants, including the Chief Veterinary Officer/ Animal Health Quarantine Office, Chief Veterinary Officer/ District Livestock Service Office and media representatives expressed their strong commitment to join hands in declaring the area as Diclofenac Free Zone.

2. Critically Endangered white-backed vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) rescued by local community

On 10th March 2010, locals discovered a sick white-backed vulture in a forested area, close to the feeding site. The vulture was severely emaciated and could not fly. Detailed physical examinations (project staff have received training on vulture husbandry from experts from International Centre for Birds of Prey, UK, Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK and Zoological Society of London, UK) revealed no sign of injury or diclofenac poisoning. The bird has since been kept in a safe environment with advice from experts from RSPB and provided food and care. The bird has improved in captive care. Consultation is now underway on whether the bird should be shifted to Government's Vulture Conservation and Breeding Center as part of its captive breeding programme or to a veterinary care facility for future release back into the wild.

3. Symbolic destruction of diclofenac stockpiles

On 31st March 2010 diclofenac collected from across Nepal by Bird Conservation Nepal over the last 3 years (51.7 litres and 13, 064 bolus) was destroyed at Vulture Safe Zone Nawalparasi. Among those present during the ceremony were Director General of Department of Drug Administration, senior officials from Nepal Veterinary Council, Nepal Veterinary Association, Nepal Para Veterinary and Livestock Association, Department of National Parks



and Wildlife Conservation, Veterinary Drug Standards and Administration Office, Directorate of

Animal Health, and an RSPB documentary team. Also present were conservation organisations, local leaders, community and the press.

Earlier, on the evening of 30th March, an interaction programme was organized between the invited guests from government line agencies, veterinary community and conservation community to discuss cross-cutting issues of the Vulture Conservation Action Plan for Nepal 2009-2013 as it was a rare opportunity to get so many experts from different background sitting together on the same table. Overhead funds from Rufford Small Grants were used to co-fund the destruction event.