



INTERIM REPORT

**ASSESSING DIETARY HABITS,
NESTING SUCCESS AND
NSAID EXPOSURE OF
BREEDING RAPTORS IN THE
THAR DESERT**

JUNE 2025 - PRESENT

Introduction

NSAID exposure risk, food scarcity, and nest-failure are important knowledge gaps that need to be addressed in tandem for improving conservation planning for raptors. Thus, this project focused on monitoring nests, identifying diet and quantifying prevalence of NSAIDs.

The project had the following objectives:

- 1. Identification of nesting sites for resident breeding raptors*
- 2. Monitoring of identified nests to evaluate breeding success*
- 3. Understanding the diet composition of the study species*
- 4. Conducting surveys to understand the prevalence of NSAID use*
- 5. Outreach with veterinarians, pharmacies, pastoralists and villagers to promote conservation of raptors sensitise them against use/sale of harmful NSAIDs and regarding protection of vultures*

In the last 10 months, the project has made significant progress on all the five objectives and completed the proposed outcomes for 3 out of the 5 objectives. Activities under the remaining two objectives are currently ongoing and are expected to be completed in the next two years.



Activities and Targets

Objective	Methodology	Indicator	Achievement
Identification of nesting sites	<p>Vehicle surveys across the landscape to find nesting sites</p> <p>Additional nest search using informant network</p>	<p>Number of kilometres surveyed for nests Target: Minimum 1000 km</p> <p>Number of nesting and roosting sites identified Target: At least 5 new nests per species, and 30 new nests overall</p>	<p>A total of 5055 km surveyed in a ~2000 sq.km study area.</p> <p>Total 24 new nests belonging to 5 species identified</p>
Evaluating breeding success	<p>Nest site characterisation</p> <p>Remote monitoring using camera-traps</p> <p>Regular visits to determine breeding success at various stages</p> <p>Identification of factors influencing nesting success at various stages</p>	<p>Number of nests characterised Target: All nests identified</p> <p>Monitoring using camera traps Target: Minimum 30% of all nests</p> <p>Monitoring of breeding success Target: Minimum 50% of all nests</p>	<p>Total of 60 nests from the 2024-25 and 2025-26 season characterised</p> <p>A total of 13 nests monitored using cameratraps and CCTV cameras</p> <p>Breeding success being monitored for all the 27 active nests identified in 2025-26.</p>

Activities and Targets

Objective	Methodology	Indicator	Achievement
<p>Understanding the diet composition</p>	<p>Collection of fresh fecal samples from nesting and roosting sites</p> <p>Identification of diet from fecal samples, using DNA metabarcoding</p> <p>Ancillary observations of prey remains at nests, and visitation at carcasses</p>	<p>Number of scats collected and analysed using DNA metabarcoding Target: At least 10 per species, 96 in total</p>	<p>A total of 66 samples were collected from the wild</p> <p>Genetic analysis is currently ongoing</p> <p>Active nests of all the species were monitored using drones to identify prey items provisioned to the chick</p>
<p>Quantifying NSAID prevalence</p>	<p>Interviews with herders and pastoralists to understand patterns of NSAID use</p> <p>Pharmacy surveys to assess over-the-counter availability of NSAIDs harmful to raptors</p>	<p>Number of pastoralists interviewed Target : Minimum 100 people</p> <p>Number of pharmacies surveyed Target : Minimum 20 pharmacies</p>	<p>Over 300 pastoralists interviewed</p> <p>Total 20 pharmacies in the area surveyed for NSAIDs</p>

Activities and Targets

Objective	Methodology	Indicator	Achievement
Outreach with stakeholders	<p>Meetings with veterinarians and pharmacy owners to inform them about banned NSAIDs and their impact on vulture populations</p> <p>Distribution of posters and outreach material</p> <p>Sensitisation of locals regarding ill effects of using banned NSAIDs</p>	<p>Number of pharmacy owners sensitised Target : At least 20 pharmacies</p> <p>Number of sensitisation meetings in villages Target : At least 20 meetings</p>	<p>A slightly different approach was taken - pastoralists interviewed for NSAIDs were sensitised against use of harmful NSAIDs. Meetings were conducted in villages as well as large gatherings such as Forest Fairs and Desert Festivals</p> <p>Pharmacy sensitisation will also be conducted</p>

Ongoing work

The following activities will be conducted in the next few months:

- *Genetic analysis for diet identification*
- *Nest search for Egyptian Vulture and Laggar Falcon*
- *Analysis of data*
- *Outreach with pharmacies*