

Vulture numbers, rate of nesting success rise

130 Vultures Spotted Between Viramgam, Surendranagar

Himanshu.Kaushik
@timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: Vulture conservationists were pleased to spot some 45-50 nests of 130 white rumped vultures between Viramgam in Ahmedabad district and Surendranagar after some five years. What is fueling their excitement is that the nesting success rate was greater than 50% this season.

Sources in the forest department said these numbers were last seen in 2009 in the area. In the recent past there were some nesting sites but not as many as these. The 2010 and 2012 vulture census by forest department had shown no traces of vultures in the area.

Officials said the return of vultures began in 2013, but this year the number of nests is 45-50 and with a high success rate of 50%.

According to Aditya Roy, who is working in the area and is doing his doctorate thesis: 'Status and Conservation of Gyps vultures in Provisional



The return of vultures began in 2013, but this year the number of nests is 45-50 and with a high success rate of 50%.

Vulture Safe Zone Central Gujarat, Ahmedabad,' in association with the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore, said: "The results are very encouraging as in the recent past one couldn't find vultures here."

"The return of the vulture indicates that use of diclofenac in treatment for cattle is under control and as a result the scavenging birds are making a comeback. The overall outcome of the project will be the creation of a diclofenac-free vulture safe zone of approx. 30,000 sq.km surrounding Ahmedabad," said Roy.

He further said Gujarat has started witnessing sightings of Himalayan griffons, Eurasian griffons and cinereous vultures between December and March and Egyptian

vultures round the year in and around Little Rann of Kutch. These scavengers mainly come to roost in the Little Rann and then feed on carcasses in nearby areas.

The vulture population of the Charotar region of Central Gujarat is also steadily increasing. From some 35-40 vultures and seven nests counted in the twin districts of Anand and Kheda in 2013, the population has increased to around 75 birds with some 15 nests in the Charotar belt.

