

Project Updates: January 2019

We monitored the a total of 13 safe and unsafe dumping sites on a weekly basis during the last 3 months to understand vulture population and carcass dumping events in these sites. In October 2018, only Egyptian vultures (ranging from five to 70 individuals during a single observation) were recorded, including in the unsafe dumping sites (five to 12 individuals over the pylons); they were shifted to safer locations. In November 2018, Himalayan vultures (five to 13 individuals during a single observation), steppe eagles (eight to 17 individuals) were seen at three carcass dumping sites and cinereous vulture (four individuals) and red-headed vulture (one individual) at the one safe dumping site in Dehradun district, along with the resident Egyptian vultures (17-98 individuals). In the Haridwar district, only Egyptian vultures (eight to 17 individuals) were recorded. Six species of vultures were recorded during December 2018 in the monitored safe dumping sites. Most were Egyptian vultures (23-132 individuals in Dehradun and 12-29 in Haridwar), followed by Himalayan vultures (17-64 in Dehradun and eight to 10 in Haridwar), Eurasian vultures (eight to 17 individuals), cinereous vultures (three to 13 individuals), white-backed vultures (one to four individuals) and red-headed vulture (one to three individuals). Besides that, information on assemblage of six vulture species throughout the Terai region with the help of "Vulture Mitra" was also collected and a single record of one critically endangered long-billed vulture (confirmation needed) was made from the Corbett landscape. The critically endangered slender-billed vulture was not recorded during the last 3 months unlike the previous surveys. Along with the vulture population, steppe eagles were among the most abundant (eight to 67 individuals) raptor scavenger in the monitored dumping sites.

In terms of food availability, on average 1.4 livestock carcasses/day were recorded in these monitored dumping sites.

In terms of electrocution mortality risk, mortality of any vultures was not recorded unlike the previous months. However, the roosting of species like Egyptian vultures and steppe eagles on the power tower/pylons within the proximity of 400-500 m from carcass dumping sites was observed.

During the study period, NSAID surveys were completed, covering a total of 200 pharmacies in the six Terai districts of Uttarakhand state. We recorded harmful drugs like ketoprofen, nimesulide, flunixin and aceclofenac from the pharmacies but the safe drug meloxicam was also among the most prevalent drugs in the region. The data analysis is under process to draw the inferences.

On the basis of data collected from market and the state Animal Husbandry Department on the availability and use of ketoprofen, nimesulide and flunixin in the livestock treatment, we have approached concerned agencies to ban the vulture toxic NSAIDs in the state, likewise the state of Tamil Nadu. The Animal Husbandry Department has informed that they do not have any such direction from national or state drug controller office and they can initiate such action only thereafter. The advocacy with the office of state drug controller is in the process.

A total of two awareness cum discussion meetings on vulture conservation were held with communities and one with frontline staff of forest department (January 7th 2019). A

total of 54 participants attended the event. These programmes were organised in the collaboration with Himalayan Institute for Sustainable Environment & Research Society, Doon University and Uttarakhand Forest Department. Beside these awareness events, the 8th SAVE (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction) meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal was attended during 29-30 November, 2018. A presentation was delivered on "Assessment of market availability and use of veterinary NSAIDs in Uttarakhand".

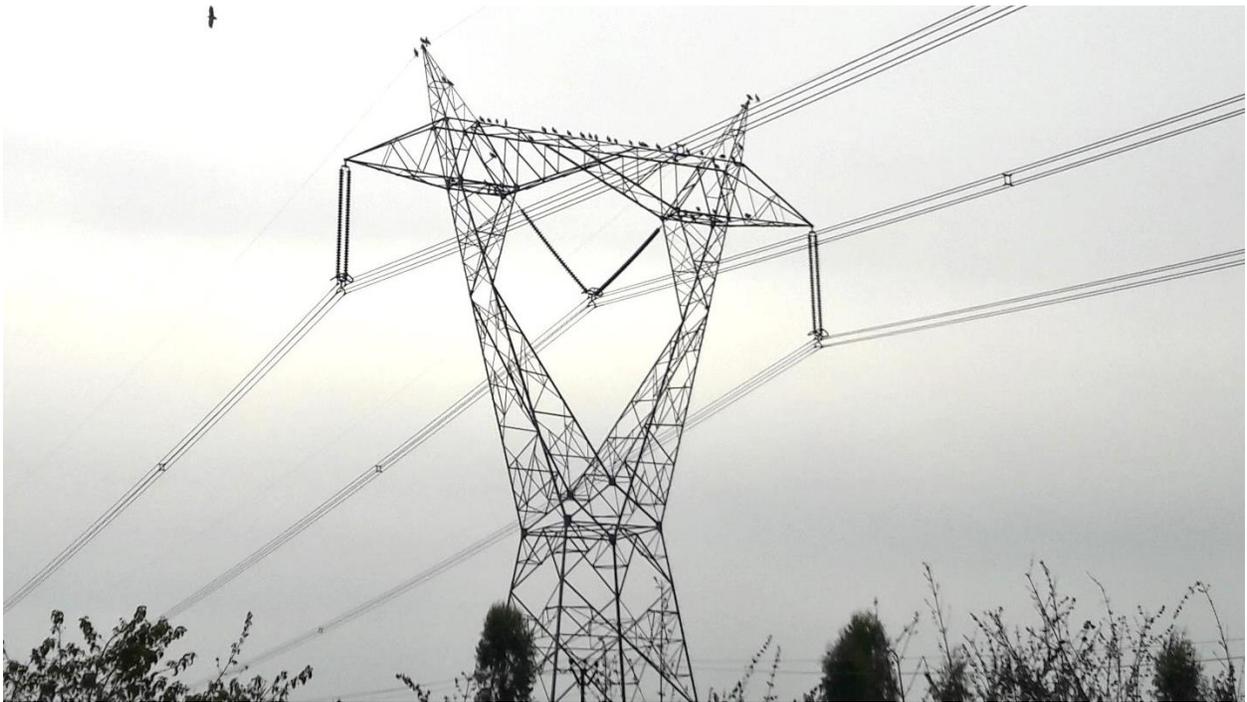
The monitoring surveys and action in the upcoming months would be focused on preventing electrocution mortality of vultures in unsafe sites. The outcomes and progress of the study and actions taken on vulture conservation issues in Uttarakhand state are to be shared at the Rufford Conference scheduled to be held in Corbett, Ramanagar, and Uttarakhand from 8th-11th February, 2019. Also, the proposed transboundary meeting with stakeholder on vulture conservation issues is scheduled to be held in the last week of February 2019.



Figure 1: Livestock carcasses in a safe dumping site of Doon valley



Figure 2: An unsafe site after shifting it to a safer location



Roosting of Egyptian vultures on the power pylon in Doon valley



A shifted safe carcass dumping site in Doon valley



Prof. B C Choudhury (Left) addressing the forest guards during the discussion meeting



Shri Subodh Kala, Sub-Divisional Officer, Chakarata Forest Division addressing the participants



Participants and resource person during the awareness cum discussion meeting with frontline staff of forest department at Forest Guard Training Centre, Rampur Mandi, Dehradun

Vultures of Uttarakhand

उत्तराखण्ड में पाए जाने वाले गिद्ध



1. White-backed Vulture/ बंगाल का गिद्ध (CR)
2. Long-billed Vulture/ भारतीय गिद्ध (CR)
3. Slender-billed Vulture/ लम्बी चोंच का गिद्ध (CR)
4. Red-headed Vulture/ लाल सिर वाला गिद्ध (CR)
5. Egyptian Vulture/ सफेद गिद्ध (EN)
6. Lammergeier/ हडफोड़ गिद्ध (NT)
7. Cinereous Vulture/ काला गिद्ध (NT)
8. Himalayan Vulture/ हिमालयी गिद्ध (NT)
9. Eurasian Vulture/ यूरेशियाई गिद्ध (LC)

उत्तराखण्ड राज्य में भारत की सभी नौ गिद्ध प्रजातियाँ पायी जाती हैं। जिनमें से चार प्रजातियाँ Critically Endangered (CR), एक Endangered (EN), तीन Near Threatened (NT) तथा एक को Least Concern (LC) श्रेणी में रखा गया है।



Let's come together to conserve vultures of India

आइए हम सब मिलकर गिद्धों के संरक्षण में सहयोग करें

A new poster on Vulture of Uttarakhand (all nine species of India) for awareness and outreach programme