

## Project Updates: October 2018

During March, April, May and June 2018 we shifted five unsafe sites in Dehradun and two unsafe sites in Haridwar to a safer location with the help of skimmers and panchayat administration. As a result the electrocution mortality of vultures including other raptors in such unsafe carcass dumping sites was reduced up to 85-90 % of last years. The shifted safe livestock carcass dumping sites in Dehradun and Haridwar districts and other safe (17 sites) were surveyed during July, August and September 2018, to understand the use of these as feeding sites by vultures and other scavengers. In most of these sites only Egyptian vultures (ranging from five to 40 during a single observation in each site) were recorded feeding on animal carcasses, as scavengers birds like Himalayan vulture, cinereous vulture, Eurasian vulture and steppe eagle are migratory to Uttarakhand Terai region from November to May. However, two white-backed vultures and one red-headed vulture were recorded in July 2018 nearby a safe shifted carcass dumping sites in Dehradun and two red-headed vultures over a site in Haridwar district. Other resident *Gyps* vultures including the recently recorded *Gyps indicus* were not seen during the last 3 months monitoring of selected carcass dumping sites in study districts.

During the monitoring surveys in other Terai districts white-backed vultures were seen in small numbers (three to five individuals) many times and the community in these districts has also reported sighting of these time to time since last 3-4 years.

During the study period surveys were undertaken in other Terai districts of Uttarakhand to understand the availability and use of vulture toxic NSAIDs in veterinary treatment. A total of 76 pharmacies in the districts of Nainital, U.S Nagar, Champawat and Pauri were surveyed and unlike the previous surveys, harmful diclofenac (including large vial of human-use diclofenac) was not available with any pharmacy. We recorded harmful drugs like ketoprofen, nimesulide, flunixin and aceclofenac from the pharmacies, however, nimesulide (most prevalent) was present in about 70 % of surveyed pharmacies. We also collected information on these vulture toxic drugs from State Animal Husbandry Department and found that most of the veterinary hospitals of all the 13 districts of Uttarakhand state, purchasing and using ketoprofen, nimesulide and flunixin in the livestock treatment. However, the study found prevalent use of meloxicam (drug which is considered safe for vultures) among the governmental and private practitioners.

The outcome of the study till date were shared with a series of meetings with governmental authorities like the Secretary, Environment and Forest (Uttarakhand), the Secretary, Animal Husbandry Department, the Member Secretary, Uttarakhand State Biodiversity Board (SBB) and Executive Officer, District Panchayat, Dehradun. Information was also shared with the Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand, the Member Secretary, Pollution Control Board (SPCB), the Managing Director, Power Transmission Corporation Ltd of Uttarakhand (UPCL) and the Managing Director, Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) through a formal letter. The concerned authorities were requested to provide necessary directions to responsible officers/people to initiate appropriate action in order to prevent electrocution mortality and to ban the vulture toxic NSAIDs in the state, likewise the state of Tamilnadu. **The Secretary, Environment**

and Forest (Uttarakhand) has undertaken immediate action on our request regarding ban on harmful veterinary drugs and suggested to the Secretary, Animal Husbandry department to take necessary actions, however, the action is still in the process.

A total of seven awareness education and outreach programmes on vulture conservation were held with community (villagers or farmers) and school/college students. Out of these five such events were organised on the occasion of International Vulture Awareness Day on September 1st 2018. Activities like documentary screening, conservation talk, nukkad-natak (play), and dance, painting competition, mehndi competition and other were organised at various levels. These programmes were organised in the collaboration with Himalayan Institute for Sustainable Environment & Research Society, Doon University, Sai Group of Institutions and City Montessori School, Ranikhet. Two consultation meetings were also held with the skinner community in Haridwar and Dehradun district.

Beside these awareness events, a paper titled **“Dynamics of scavenging ecosystem service role in the absence of vultures in the Terai region of Uttarakhand and its implications”**, was presented in the International Biodiversity Congress held from 4th-6th October 2018, at Forest Research Institute, Dehradun.



Figure 1: A flock of Critically Endangered White-rumped vulture in the Corbett Landscape, Uttarakhand © Akhilesh Mandolia



Figure 2: Meeting with skinners at Dehradun district



Figure 3: Meeting with skinners at Haridwar district



Figure 4: Awareness programme in Government Girls Junior School Katgharia, Haldwani



Figure 5: Awareness Programme with community in Ramanagar, Corbett landscape



Figure 6: Awareness Programme on the occasion of International Vulture Awareness Day 2018



Figure 7: A painting with message to save vultures during an event on International Vulture Awareness Day 2018 in Dehradun



Figure 8: Participants during the International Vulture Awareness Day 2018 event at Sai Institute, Dehradun



Figure 9: During pharmacy survey in U.S Nagar district

## Media coverage

### गिद्धों की प्रजाति के बारे में बताया

संवाद सहयोगी, लालदांग: अंतर्राष्ट्रीय जागरूकता दिवस के अवसर पर गाजीवाली में हिमालयन इंस्टीट्यूट फॉर सस्टेनेबल एनवायरनमेंट एंड रिसर्च सोसाइटी की ओर से ग्रामीणों को गिद्धों की वर्तमान स्थिति और प्रजातियों पर संभावित

खतरों के बारे में जानकारी दी। साथ ही गीतों की संख्या में आने वाली गिरावट के बारे में भी बताया गया।

रिसर्च सोसाइटी के महेश चंद्र और टीम लीडर लीडर खीमानंद बलोदी ने बताया कि 1990 के दशक के दौरान गिद्धों की

संख्या में भारी गिरावट आई थी, इसका प्रमुख कारण पालतू पशुओं को दी जाने वाली कीड़ा नाशक दवा डाईक्लोफेनाक थी। उन्होंने बताया कि 2006 से भारत सरकार ने इस दवा पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया था, लेकिन यह दवा इंसान के प्रयोग में

भी आती है। जिसका जानवर में प्रयोग देखने को मिला है। इस अवसर पर गोपाल दत्त, भगवान सिंह बिष्ट, पवन पंत, सोनू लाला, अमित कुमार, गोविंद बल्लभ, ललिता देवी, ममता रावत, लता देवी आदि उपस्थित रहे।

### चित्रकला प्रतियोगिता

रानीखेत (अल्मोड़ा)। सिटी मांटेसरी स्कूल में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय गिद्ध दिवस पर चित्रकला प्रतियोगिता हुई। दून युनिवर्सिटी और एचआईएसईआर के सहयोग से आयोजित कार्यक्रम को संबोधित करते हुए प्रधानाचार्य विनोद खुल्बे ने गिद्धों की प्रजातियों के बारे में बताया। चित्रकला और वाद-विवाद प्रतियोगिता में बच्चों ने प्रतिभा दिखाई। कार्यक्रम में शोध छात्र खीमानंद बलोदी ने भी सहयोग किया। ब्यूरो

### एक नजर

#### गिद्धों का पर्यावरण संरक्षण में अहम योगदान

देहरादून : हिमालयन इंस्टीट्यूट फॉर सस्टेनेबल इन्वायरनमेंट एंड रिसर्च सोसायटी और दून विश्वविद्यालय के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय गिद्ध जागरूकता दिवस पर गिद्धों के संरक्षण विषय पर गोष्ठी आयोजित की गई। साईं इंस्टीट्यूट में आयोजित गोष्ठी में हिमालयन इंस्टीट्यूट की प्राचार्य डॉ. संध्या डोगरा ने पर्यावरण में गिद्धों के महत्व के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि पर्यावरण संरक्षण में गिद्धों का अहम योगदान है। गोष्ठी के समन्वयक दून विवि के रिसर्च स्कॉलर खीमानंद बलोदी ने गिद्धों के धार्मिक, आर्थिक एवं पर्यावणीय महत्व की जानकारी दी। साथ ही गिद्धों की प्रजातियों पर संभावित खतरों के बारे में बताया। इस अवसर पर साईं इंस्टीट्यूट के संस्थापक हरीश अरोड़ा, डीन वीडि शर्मा, जैव प्रोद्योगिकी के विभागाध्यक्ष विकास मिश्रा आदि मौजूद रहे। (जासं)

Link 1: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/dehradun/sightings-in-corbett-tiger-reserve-raise-hopes-on-conservation-of-endangered-vultures/story-Fm0BBvW5KQBrWYFfyaOv4O.html>

Link 2: <https://ibcddn2018.co.in/book-of-abstracts/>

(International Biodiversity Congress held at Forest Research Dehradun during 4-7 October 2018)