

Resolutions Adopted at the Vulture Conservation Workshop
held in Udthagamandalam (Ooty), Tamil Nadu
on 8th-9th January 2018

1. The workshop has formed “Vulture Conservation Working Group - South India” (VCWG-SI)” which is committed to protect the vultures in south India, and to advocate suitable conservation measures to protect their habitats in south India. VCWG-SI sincerely expresses its appreciation for the efforts made by
 - (a) Forest Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, for its contribution for coordinating the South India workshop on ‘Securing Vulture Populations’.
 - (b) The Secretary to Government & the Director, Animal Husbandry Department, Tamil Nadu for withdrawal of vulture harmful drug 'ketoprofen' from the Government dispensary.
 - (c) Drug Control General of India for banning Multi Dose Vials (MDV) of diclofenac and records its gratitude to the Honorable High Court of Madras for upholding the ban of MDV of diclofenac.
 - (d) Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation and State Drug Control Department of Tamil Nadu for their support and also for conducting periodic raids in the pharmacies.
 - (e) Forest Departments of Kerala and Karnataka for faster compensation process to livestock owners for livestock kills by large carnivores and reducing the pressure of retaliatory poisoning.

And RESOLVES to

- (1) Appeal to the Secretary to Government & the Director, Animal Husbandry Department of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana
 - (a) Not to procure Non-Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) and other similar veterinary drugs that are harmful to the vultures such as Aceclofenac, Nimesulide and Ketoprofen for the Government dispensary and initiate necessary action for the

- immediate withdrawal of all harmful NSAIDs from all Government dispensaries. Instead to promote traditional remedies and medicines or known safe drugs such as meloxicam.
- (b) State Governments in South India to issue the appropriate Government order for testing of NSAIDs in dead cattle and vulture carcasses and sending the tissue samples to least three, but not limiting to fully equipped laboratories such as Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Sálim Ali Center for Ornithology (SACON), Advinus or Veterinary colleges in the respective States.
- (2) Highlight poisoning of carcasses which poses a grave threat to the vulture populations and appeals to the State Principal Secretary to Ministry of Environment & Forests, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Wildlife Warden of respective State Forest Departments to initiate policy level decisions to immediately ease the compensation process in order to curtail the poisoning of cattle carcasses. Because of the understandably high profile concern for avoiding poisoning of large cats, and the measures already in place to tackle this issue, there is some very positive synergy here between these measures and those needed for vultures. Reinforcing these synergies as part of the vulture action plan is absolutely needed.
- (3) Expresses its concern over the forest fires in and around vultures nesting colonies and appeals to the State Forest Departments to take necessary fire protection measures to prevent such fires destroying vulture nests and its habitat.
- (4) Appeals State Governments in South India to appoint and train Vulture Watchers from the indigenous ethnic communities and initiate people's participatory approach for vulture conservation by also involving the conservation organisations and institutions, policy makers, NGO's and other interested individuals for promotion of 'Vulture Safe Zones' in South India.
- (5) Highlights the need for a 'Vulture Conservation Action Plan' in their management plans of all forest divisions. Similarly, all 'Tiger Reserves' should also incorporate 'Vulture Conservation Action Plan' within their 'Tiger Conservation Plan', and that these be readily available in regional languages as well.

- (6) Requests that 'Vulture Research Centres' to be established and operated in all vulture ranging states by the Forest Department where a core team consisting of, but not limiting to, a veterinary doctor, wildlife biologists, research assistants and supporting field staff to monitor, document (and carry out necropsy, tissue analyses at accredited laboratories) on all the available carcasses of wild fauna including livestock and vultures as far as possible.
- (7) Expresses its concern for biotic and abiotic disturbances to vulture nesting sites and in particular, the conduct of festivals in eco-sensitive zones of Siriyur, Jagalikedavu and Karuvannarayar Temple of Moyar region (of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve) that are pose threats to vulture nesting sites and, appeals (a) to the Forest Department, Govt. of Tamil Nadu to initiate steps to control and implement suitable measures to reduce the impacts of pilgrims and/or tourists by coordinating with the District Administration and the Hindu Religious Endowment Board, Government of Tamil Nadu (b) to regulate tourism in the vultures nesting sites based on recommendations made in the Vulture Conservation Action Plan.
- (8) Appeals to the Principal Secretary to the Ministry of Environment & Forests, PCCF, Chief Wildlife Warden of Forest Department of respective States to (a) amend and/or frame the rules not to bury or burn wild animal carcasses (if there is no evidence of poisoning and contamination) and to leave them for vultures and other wild scavengers as food (b) that if any wildlife carcass is found near human settlements, suitable arrangements made to shift the carcass to the forest areas and away from human habitation.
- (9) Appeals to the respective State Forest Departments to (a) assess the impacts of windmills and power lines on the vultures and other related avifauna and take corrective measures (b) the Electricity Board to remove all overhead transmission lines or re-align power lines to avoid collision and electrocution of vultures (c) wherever possible, replace and install underground cables and wires and, (d) carry our Sensitivity mapping with respect to wind farms and transmission lines to the potential impact on vultures.
- (10) Appeals to the District Administration, Forest Department and Public Works Department of respective State Governments to monitor the quality of water in the forest

areas by joining hands with appropriate research institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations.

- (11) Appeals to the District Administration, Animal Husbandry Department and Forest Department of respective States to take appropriate steps for the disposal of poultry waste which is likely to spread unknown pathogens and contaminants across the vulture landscape.
- (12) The 'Blueprint for Vulture Conservation' be re-titled as draft of "Vulture Conservation Action Plan" and the same for each State be finalised as soon as possible.
- (13) A uniform and coordinated methodology be adopted for surveys, studies on breeding biology and ecology of vultures for all landscapes.
- (14) The State coordinators of VCWG-SI are:
 1. Dr B Ramakrishnan for Tamil Nadu
 2. Mr. Rajkumar D for Karnataka
 3. Mr. C Sashikumar for Kerala
 4. Mr. M Ravikanth for Telangana
 5. Mr. Shaik Hussain for Andhra Pradesh
with
 6. Mr. Bharathidasan S. of Arulagam as Overarching coordinator who is designated for closer co-operation and liaising with and between the State Forest Departments, Animal Husbandry departments, Drug Control authorities, conservation organisations and NGOs, etc.
- (15) VCWG-SI appeals to the 'Chief Wildlife Warden', Government of Tamil Nadu for taking necessary steps for safe release the rescued Cinereous Vulture from Kanyakumari and attaching GPS – PTT tags for monitoring its migratory route.

End.