

---

# Final Report

## Vulture Conservation Project Phase-II

Submitted to Divisional Forest Officer, Baikunthapur Division.

---



Submitted By : Koustav Choudhury



---

## Content

SI No	Particulars	Page No
1	Acknowledgements	3
2	Executive Summary	4-5
3	Introduction	6
4	Project Location	7-8
5	Characteristics and Inventory of Flora and Fauna	9
6	Progress of Work	9-14
7	Outcome	14
8	Recommendation	15
9	Photographical Documentation	15-19
10	Annexure-I	20
11	Annexure-II	21
12	Annexure-II	2-24

---

## Acknowledgement

“The Masters of Sky” is appropriate quote for Vultures. I am very much privileged getting opportunity to study these ‘Masters of Sky’ and their conservation. The way the Vultures were declining in our area, it was difficult to take up conservation programme for them without the help I have received from my entire team members, governmental and non-governmental institutes, etc. I would like to thank the individuals and organisations who have made it possible to implement the project.

I am grateful to the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), India for approving this project proposal and providing financial support through Rapid Action Programme (RAP) to carry out this laborious vulture conservation activity. Without the financial support it would have not been possible to provide ‘Diclofenac, Monocrotophos and Thymate-free’ environment to the vulture population In this region. I am thankful to ‘Rapid Action Programme Coordinator’, WTI for facilitating my entire project.

I am also thankful to Mr. Debol Roy, IFS, PCCF (Wildlife) & CWLW, Mr. Rajendra Jakher, IFS, CCF Wildlife North and Mr. Hari Krishna, IFS, DFO Baikunthopur Division of West Bengal Forest Department for giving me and my team enormous support to complete this project.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. Soumya Chakraborty, In charge –Vulture Breeding Centre, Rajabhatkhawa (BNHS) for his guidance, positive energy and warmth that he showed all through the project, no matter how busy he was.

I am also thankful to the Range Officer (Ambari Range), Panchayet and Villagers of Jatiyakali Area for there enormous support and positive attitude for the protection of our precious vulture species.

---

## Executive Summary

Vultures Conservation Project, Phase-I was approved in May 2020 by RAP of WTI, India. After the death of 13 vultures in Majhiali of Ambari under Jalpaiguri of West Bengal. However, to get better results for the objectives of the project, three aspects, namely Population monitoring at breeding sites, analysis of the reason of death and extension sensitization were started right from June 2020.

We have identified that the use of a banned drug Diclofenac and banned pesticide Monocrotophos along with another pesticide Thymate are the main reason for the decline of vulture population in this region. Diclofenac are mainly used for cattle where as Monocrotophos and Thymate are used for leaf and soil culture respectively.

After identification we have stated interacting with villagers of this region along with tea estate owners, pesticides dealers, drug dealers etc. We have organized more than 50 systematic sensitization workshops and group meeting with the stakeholders during this last 12 months over a 595.89 Km<sup>2</sup> landscape. Total 11730 villagers and stakeholders are sensitized.

When asked about the reasons responsible for population drop, 20.96% of the respondents answered that some chemical drug was responsible for vulture population crash but they did not know the name of the drug and had never before heard of diclofenac.

The diclofenac toxicity awareness was seriously lacking among the local communities as only 12.66% respondents have slight idea that the some drug is responsible for the steep decline of the vulture.

Conservation awareness campaigns were regularly held based on questionnaire survey. Villages located near the study area were made more aware about the dumping practices, diclofenac free treatment of their livestock and the main focus was being on diclofenac toxicity awareness.

Awareness campaigns were also held in different tea gardens and villages around the study area to make the people aware about the recent vulture declines, causes for declines, importance of vultures as scavengers and related conservation issues. We could convince people not to disturb vultures and its nests. Regular meetings were held with local peoples operating around the study area and meloxicam (safe alternative drug) was distributed to them to promote use of meloxicam in the area. The availability of meloxicam at subsidized price in future was thoroughly discussed.



---

We have also constantly liaising with West Bengal Forest Department, local administrations, leaders, Rajabhatkhawa Vulture Breeding Centre and other stakeholders regarding the progress of our project.

We have also monitored vulture feeding site near jatiakali of jalpaiguri District from last 12 months, where we have recorded highest 257 Himalayan Griffon Vultures along with 14 White Rumped Vulture in that feeding site on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. That feeding site is a private land where Siliguri Municipal Corporation dump animal carcasses. We sensitize the villagers near that feeding site for the protection of those vultures, we have also communicated with SMC for the proper protection of that area and secure that regular animal carcasses should be dumped in that land.

After completion of Vulture Conservation Project, we have applied for Phase-II as we have identified that very minimum protection is available in Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping area as it is a private land. We also have very limited data of vulture population density in Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping Ground. We have also identified that few vultures are injured due to various anthropogenic pressures and gradually die with out treatment as the information of those injured vultures are not reaching to West Bengal Forest Department in time.

So, we have started Phase-II of this project, where we have conducted several meeting and workshops with the villagers near Jatiyakali and Fulbari area along with the residents residing near Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping area, We have formed “Vulture Population Monitoring Team” by involving and motivating local youth near Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping area, we also provide them training regarding monitoring of vulture population and information sharing. We have also conducted Vulture Population Density Estimation by using “Point Count Methods” in each Saturdays or Sundays of every week of every month in Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping area. We have also conducted meeting with Siliguri Municipal Corporation regarding the regularisation of carcasses dumping in this area.

To conclude, financial support for this project showed the importance of identification of use of harmful drugs and pesticides and sensitization along with feeding sites monitoring and population density estimation for vultures for stabilizing their population. The results of this project show the way for vulture recovery programme.

---

## Introduction

To Northern West Bengal landscape consist of forest areas, tea estates, human settlements and mountains. This region is one of most the finest region for wildlife of India. As human populations are raising in a drastic rate so the forest coverage are gradually sinking due to urbanisation. Due to urbanisation and other aspects like use of banned pesticides and drugs (Dyclofenac, Monocrotophous, Thymate etc.) the vulture population are declined in a rapid rate in this region from last three decades. We have identified that a large number of the vulture population are straying in a private carcasses dumping ground in Jatiyakali area and those vultures are got injured and eventually died due to several issues like electrocution, dehydration etc. The area is under a private ownership so very limited protection are available for those schedule one species.

So to address this issue Solitary Nature and Animal Protection (SNAP) Foundation team lead by Mr. Koustav Choudhury has started this Vulture Conservation Project Phase-II with the financial support from Wildlife Trust of India. The project supported by West Bengal Forest Department. We have mainly focused on creating proper sensitisation and awareness activities in Jatiyakali, Fulbari, Bandhunagar, Mantadari, Ambari, Belakoba, Fatapukur and Gajoldoba area regarding the importance of Vulture n our ecology and coexistence and problem and punishment related to use of illegal pesticides and drugs along with proper monitoring, population estimation and information sharing regarding the threats and problems related to vulture population and vulture injuries.

### **Our main objectives are :**

- Monitoring & survey of vulture population in Jatiyakali and other areas of Baikunthopur

Division.

- Engage local communities towards the protection of vultures and form a **Vulture**

**Monitoring Team** with the local youths.

- Monitoring vultures using camera traps.
- Coordinate with **Siliguri Municipal Corporation** to facilitate regular carcasses dumping in

Jatiyakali area.

- Regular information sharing with the **West Bengal Forest Department** regarding vulture population monitoring.

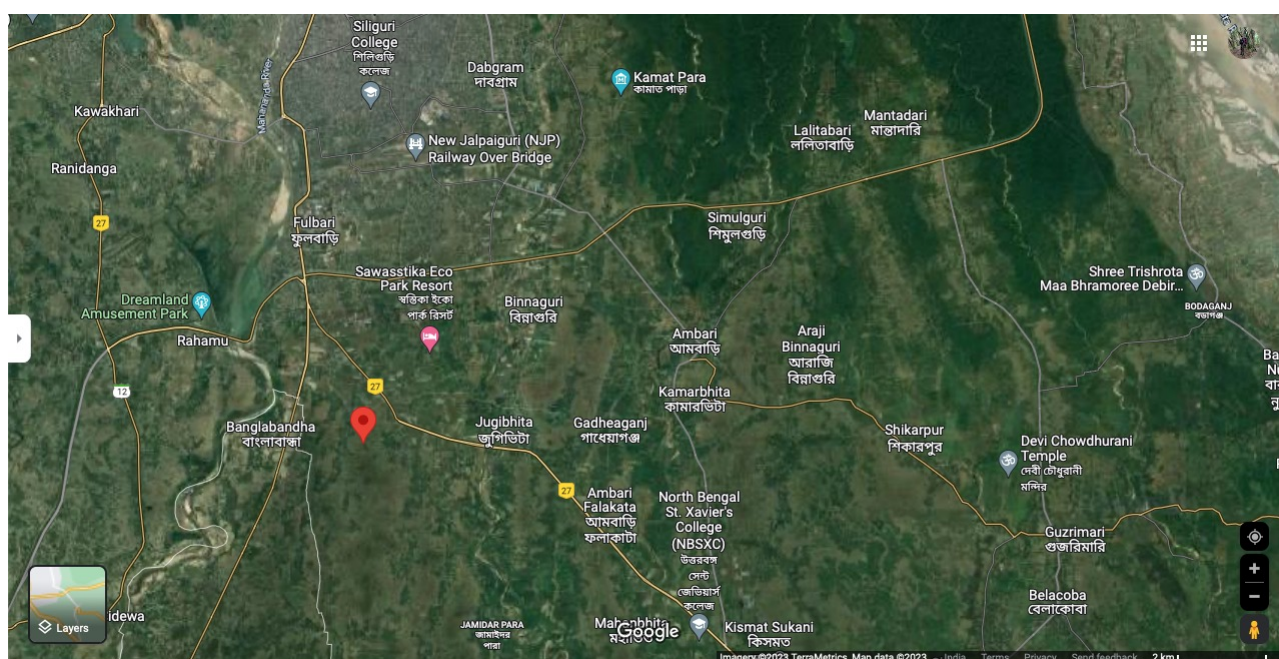
- Consult and coordinate with the vet of Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Rajabhatkahawa regarding the injuries, electrocution and poisoning.

## Project Location

Project location comprising of Jatiyakali, Fulbari, Bandhunagar, Ambari, Mantadari, Belakoba areas which are under Jalpaiguri District and outskirts of Siliguri City. All the areas are out side protected area and patch forest surrounded by human settlement. The main carcasses dumping ground in Jatiyakali is also adjacent to Bangladesh boarder. The carcasses dumping ground is a private ownership land which are used to dump carcasses under Siliguri Municipal Corporation.

Geo Location of Carcasses Dumping and Vulture Feeding Area: 26°37'27" N 88°25'47E

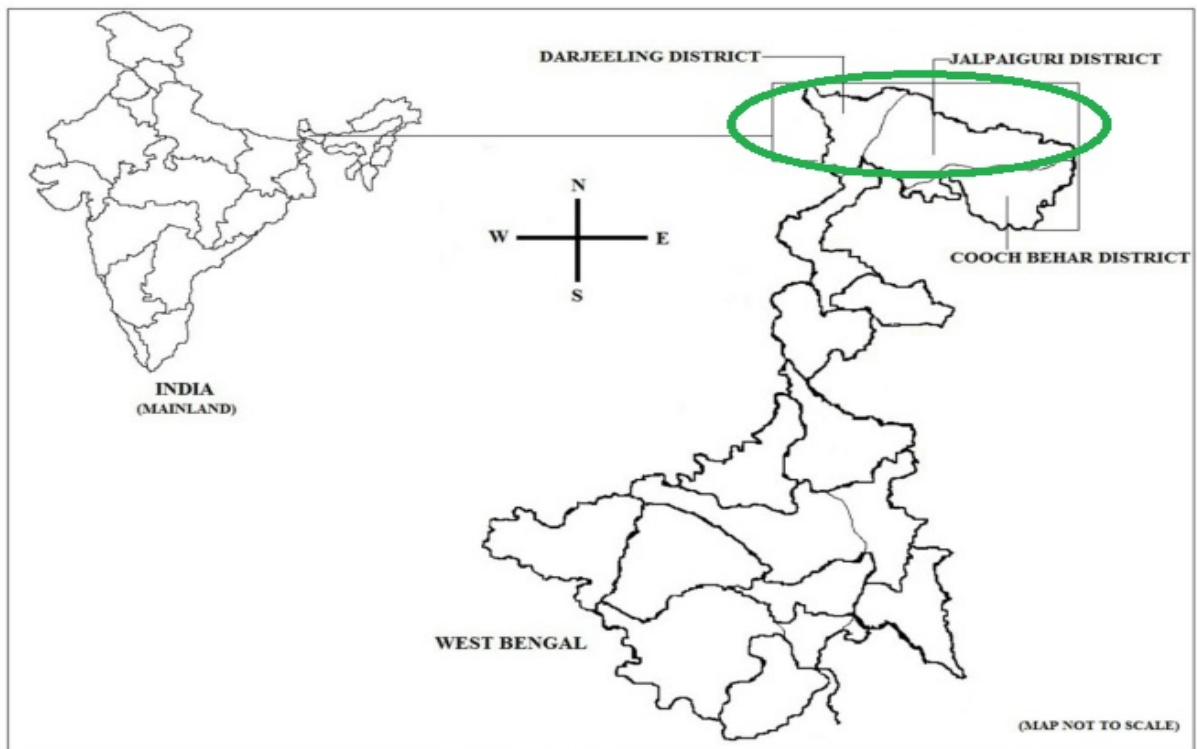
Total Project Area : 588 Sq. Km. ; Total Perimeter : 105 Sq. Km.



**Map of Vulture Feeding Ground**



**Map of Total Project Area**



**Map of Project Location in West Bengal**



---

## Characteristic & Inventory of Flora & Fauna

The distribution of vegetation in northern West Bengal is dictated by elevation and precipitations. For example, the foothills of Himalayas, the doors, are densely wooded with sal and other tropical evergreen trees. However, above the elevation of 1000 metres, the forest becomes predominantly subtropical. West Bengal has 3.26% of its geographical area under protected areas comprising of wildlife sanctuaries, National Parks, tiger reserves etc. Others are reserve forests. Northern West Bengal is the home for Elephants, Rhinos, Leopards, Indian Gaurs, deer species and many more herbivores and carnivores along with various bird species including Vultures.

## Progress of Work

Approval of this project under RAP of WTI was conveyed to us in March 2022. Hence we started the activities right from April 2022 as the financial support for the same was ensured. Himalayn Griffon Vultures start nesting right in early September and hence it was right time to start awareness and sensitisation activities about the importance of vultures in our ecology and use of illegal drugs and pesticides which effects vulture population along with listening with West Bengal Forest Department, Siliguri Municipal Corporation and other Local Authorities regarding the project. After conducting extensive field work and sensitisation and awareness activities we have started vulture population monitoring and estimation from September 2022 in Jatiyakali of Jalpaiguri District. Details of the activities carried out during the report period are given below.

### 1. SENSITISATION & AWARENESS

As we have already know the reason of the vulture population decline, so we have stated sensitisation and awareness in targeted villages. We have finalise 588 Sq Km area of Siliguri and jalpaiguri District consist of Siliguri Sub Division, Jalpaiguri Town, Ambari-Falakata, Belakoba, Bandhunagar, Fatapukur, Gajoldoba, Paharpur, Randhamali. We have conducted more than 20 group meetings along with meeting with administrative personnel, political leaders and West Bengal forest department. We have conducted 25 workshops and group meetings in Jatiyakali area which is the feeding area of vulture population in Northern West Bengal. We have also conducted more than 5 meetings with stake holders like Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Local Administration and West Bengal Forest Department.

#### **Result :**

After year long sensitisation and awareness and intervention stakeholders and villagers are those are already given written consent that they will not those drugs and pesticides and anymore and they will also inform us if they found anyone using or selling it along with new target villagers are also taking oath not to use those illegal drugs and pesticides. Siliguri Municipal Corporation

also assured us that they will take care of regularisation of carcasses dumping in this area. Administrative personnel and West Bengal Forest Department also start monitoring the selling of this drugs and pesticides.

Area	Total Workshops/Group Meetings	No of Person Sensitised
Siliguri outskirts	2	210
Ambari-Falakata	2	300
Belakoba	2	270
Gajoldoba	2	230
Jatiyakali	25	2100
Bandhunagar	2	125
Fatapukur	2	135
Paharpur	2	160
Randhamali	2	76
Administrative Workshop	4	210
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>3816</b>

## 2. Vulture Monitoring Team

As majority of vulture population are staying in Jatiyakali area of Jalpaiguri from September to May every year and got injured or died due to less monitoring and protection. So to address these issue we have set up a “Vulture Monitoring Team” with the local villagers of Jatiyakali which is near the Vulture Feeding area. We have engaged local enthusiastic youth, those are sympathetic towards the vultures and train them regarding the monitoring, information sharing of any injuries and death of those vultures, we have also engage them in population density estimation with SNAP Foundation team. We have provided them Vulture Kit consist of Bags, Binoculars, T-Shirts, Caps, Water Bottles and Writing and Data Keeping Materials.

Results :

Due to this team SNAP Foundation and Baikunthopur Division of West Bengal Forest Department are able to save more than 9 injured vultures in this region. We have also sensitive more than 1000 people of Jatiyakali with the help of this team regarding the importance of vultures in our ecology. This team is very much helpful also in population monitoring and density analysis of vulture population in Jatiyakali carcasses dumping ground.

Total VMT Members	Total Sensitization Done by the Team	Total Information Shared	Total Vulture Rescued due to the Team
9	20	25	9

### 3. Population Monitoring At Nesting Site:

#### Methods

In this area, the Himalayan Griffon Vultures start nest building activity in the month of September. They build nest mainly on tall Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) trees. Hence, nesting/roosting birds can not be located during the road transect. We consulted the labourers engaged in coconut harvesting and villagers to get additional information about presence of vultures in their area. Count of vultures with active nests gave an idea of their population size in the area. This also gave an idea about the threats to the vulture population. We did that monitoring mainly in 5 Km radius of Feeding site.

#### Result :

- Data collected mainly from the villagers of the villages 5 Km radius of Jatiakali feeding site/ carcasses dumping ground.

Month	Total Nest	Total Vulture Sighted
September 2022	0	6
October 2022	1	2
November 2022	2	5
December 2022	4	11
January 2023	3	7
February 2023	3	10
March 2023	4	12
April 2023	4	6

#### 4. Population Density Estimation Report.

At the feeding site monitoring was started only in September 2022. The area was under monsoonal influence till October and hence carcass dumping is not possible in the area. The carcasses do not dry up quickly under humid condition and smell badly. Jatiakali carcass dumping ground is basically a private land and Siliguri Municipal Corporation dump entire carcasses of Siliguri subdivision there.

We have used point count method to estimate the population status. We had conducted population density estimation in Saturday's or Sundays of every week of every month from September 2022 to April 2023.

Date of Count	Total Vulture Count	Total Death Vulture Reported	Species
3/9/2022	0	0	Nil
10/9/2022	0	0	Nil
17/9/2022	0	0	Nil
24/9/2022	0	0	Nil
2/10/2022	0	0	Nil
9/10/2022	0	0	Nil
16/10/2022	0	0	Nil
23/10/2022	0	0	Nil
30/10/2022	2	0	Himalayan Griffon (2)
6/11/2022	0	0	Nil
13/11/2022	9	0	Himalayn Griffon (9)
20/11/2022	14	0	Himalayn Griffon (14)
27/11/2022	25	0	Himalayan Griffon (25)
4/12/2022	37	0	Himalayan Griffon (37)
11/12/2022	32	0	Himalayan Griffon (32)
18/12/2022	56	0	Himalayan Griffon (56)
22/12/2023	59	1 Himalayan Griffon died due to Electrocutation	Himalayan Griffon (59)
25/12/2022	163	0	Himalayan Griffon (163)



Date of Count	Total Vulture Count	Total Death Vulture Reported	Species
1/1/2023	216	0	Himalayan Griffon (216)
8/1/2023	323	0	Himalayan Griffon (319), Cinereous Vulture (3), Egyptian Vulture (1)
15/1/2023	276	0	Himalayan Griffon (272), Cinereous Vulture (3), Egyptian Vulture (1)
22/1/2023	234	0	Himalayn Griffon (231), Cinereous Vulture (3)
23/1/2023	221	1 Himalayan Griffon died due to Electrocutation	Himalayan Griffon (219), Cinereous (2)
26/1/2023	314	1 Himalayan Griffon died due to Electrocutation	Himalayan Griffon (311), Cinereous Vulture (3)
29/1/2023	297	0	Himalayan Griffon (296), Cinereous Vulture (1)
5/2/2023	231	0	Himalayan Griffon (230), Cinereous Vulture (1)
12/2/2023	219	0	Himalayan Griffon (216), Cinereous Vulture (1), White-rumped Vulture (2)
19/2/2023	229	0	Himalayn Griffon (226), Cinereous Vulture (1), White-rumped Vulture (2)
26/2/2023	176	0	Himalayan Vulture (176)
5/3/2023	267	0	Himalayan Griffon (264), Cinereous Vulture (3)
12/3/2023	317	0	Himalayan Griffon (311), White-rumped Vulture (2), Cinereous Vulture (4)
19/3/2023	286	0	Himalayan Griffon (285), Cinereous Vulture (1)

Date of Count	Total Vulture Count	Total Death Vulture Reported	Species
26/3/2023	211	0	Himalayan Griffon (210), Cinereous Vulture (1)
2/4/2023	179	0	Himalayan Griffon (178), Cinereous Vulture (1)
9/4/2023	153	0	Himalayan Griffon (149), Cinereous Vulture (2), White-rumped Vulture (2)
16/4/2023	124	0	Himalayan Griffon (124)
23/4/2023	121	0	Himalayan Griffon (121)

## OUTCOME

Due to constant monitoring and population estimation, this year the population of vultures are increasing in a fair rate. The highest population count this year from September 2022 to May 2023 was 323. Previous year the highest count was 271 so we have witnessed the rise of 52 vultures this year in Jatiyakali and nearby areas. Three vultures have died due to electrocution as high and low tension electricity lines are in that area. After death of three vultures we have communicated with West Bengal Forest Department and West Bengal State Electricity Transmission Company Limited and West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited and they have assured that they will take proper approval and insulation cable will be installed in low tension lines with in this year.

We have also identified 21 nesting sites of vultures near jatiyakali carcasses dumping ground with the help of our own Vulture Monitoring Team and local villagers and after a series of awareness we are able to convince people particularly coconut orchard owners and coconut-harvesters not to disturb vultures and its nests. Our vulture monitoring team consists of local villagers did a commendable job regarding the protection, information sharing, population monitoring and awareness creation in entire project location and specifically for the protection of vultures in Jatiyakali vulture feeding area. We have conducted series of awareness and group meetings with the villagers and create proper awareness among them regarding the importance of vultures in our ecology. Now more youth are coming forward for the protection of these scavengers. We have also conducted several meetings with Siliguri Municipal Corporation and other local authorities for the regularisation of carcasses dumping in jatiyakali and as a result now we have witnessed that SMC is very active and at least 1-2 carcasses every week they dump in Jatiyakali carcasses dumping ground in average.

---

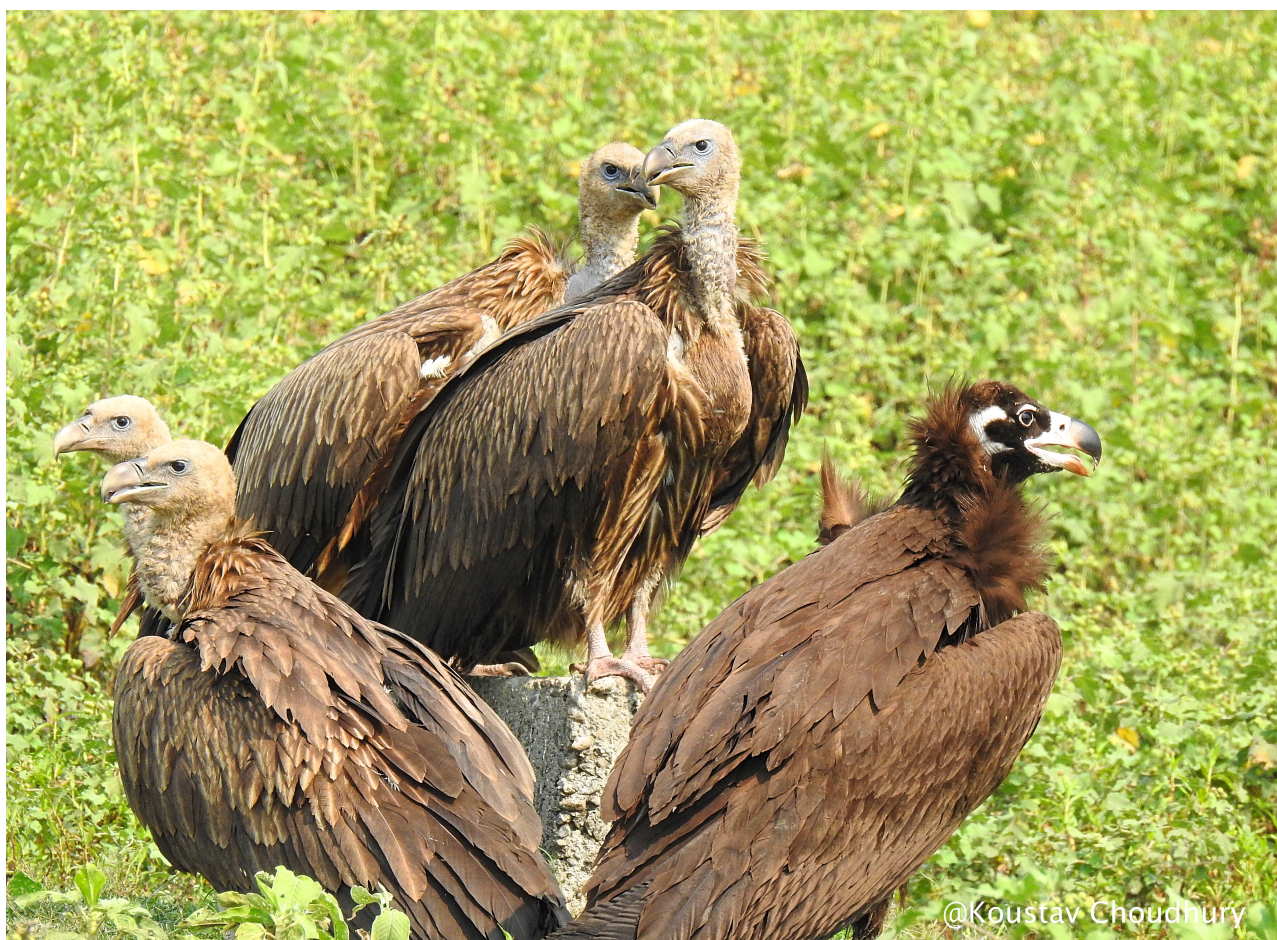
## RECOMMENDATION

Regular food supply had positive impact on population stabilization of vultures in project area and hence it is being recommended that Diclofenac-free animal carcasses should be dumped at more than one place on regular bases for the conservation of this Critically Threatened Species.

Regular Monitoring of population of vultures is highly recommended for the protection of our precious vultures in Jatiyakali area.

A basic medical facility and vulture monitoring centre should be set up for the better vulture conservation management in this area as this area is a human habitation area and not a forest land and vulture breeding centre are attest 220 km far from this area so it is very much essential to set up a vulture monitoring centre over here.

## PHOTOGRAPHICAL DOCUMENTATION



Cinereous Vulture and Himalayan Griffon at Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping Ground





Himalayan Griffon in Jatiyakali Carcasses Dumping Ground



Cinereous Vulture





Rescued Egyptian Vulture



Workshop with Villagers by SNAP Foundation & WTI Team along with Forest and Siliguri Municipal Corporation Authorities.





Vulture Monitoring Team Meeting



Vulture Population Monitoring





Village Level Meeting



Vulture Population Monitoring

## Annexure-I

# West Bengal Forest Department Permission Letter



**GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL**  
**DIRECTORATE OF FORESTS**  
Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)  
& Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal  
BikashBhawan, North Block, Third Floor, Saltlake City, Kolkata - 700 091.  
Tel No. 2334-6900/2358-3208, Fax. 91-033-2334-5946  
e-mail: pccfwl-wb@nic.in, Visit us at www.wildbengal.com

No. 146 /WL/2M-115/2022

Date: 08-06-2022

To  
Shri Koustav Choudhury,  
Solitary Nature & Animal Protection Foundation  
22, Dr. B.C. Roy Road,  
East Vivekananda Pally,  
Siliguri, Dist.: Jalpaiguri,  
Pin: 734006.  
(email: [snapindia.ngo@gmail.com](mailto:snapindia.ngo@gmail.com), [info@snapindia.org](mailto:info@snapindia.org))

**Sub.: Seeking permission for Vulture Conservation Project Phase 2.**  
**Ref.: Your ref. no. SNAPF/Official/VCP-Chapter-II/Apr\_22/01, dated 08.04.2022.**

With reference to your letter and subject quoted above, conservation of Vulture in various areas of Baikunthapur Division is hereby approved, subject to following conditions

1. The approval is for the period from September, 2022 to May, 2023. Further extension if any will be considered after submission of the interim report.
2. No animals/birds of the project areas should be distressed at the time of monitoring and survey and also during installation and removal of cameras. The research team/proponents shall be responsible for safety of camera etc. and forest department is not liable for any damage/theft of cameras.
3. In no manner birds to be handled or disturbed by the team of SNAP Foundation; no trapping, netting of birds is allowed.
4. Survey team shall contact the concerned DFO well in advance along with copies of authentic photo IDs prior to initiation of any work. The survey team shall also apprise CCF, Wildlife (North) on the survey details and seek guidance. The sites and schedule of field work shall be decided in consultation with the DFO. Also the survey team shall keep concerned Range Officers informed.
5. Entry into the forests will be allowed only during sunrise to sunset. Minimum number of persons and vehicles to the extent necessary shall be used.
6. No other survey shall be carried out without prior approval of the competent authority.
7. The team will abide by the provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and Indian Forest Act, 1927 and any other directive issued by the competent authority. All restrictions/Rules in vogue are to be followed. Failure to comply with the conditions and violation of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 would amount to withdrawal of permission & subsequent punitive action.
8. The Forest Department will not be responsible for any damage or loss suffered by the survey team and also their equipments during the course of their fieldwork.
9. The research should submit monthly report along with all high resolution photos and videos collected during the research to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife & Chief Wildlife Warden, W.B. A copy may also be shared with the CCF, Wildlife, North, West Bengal and the DFO, Baikunthapur Division.
10. The final draft of research report should be submitted to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife & Chief Wildlife Warden, W.B. for his perusal. A copy should also be shared with the CCF, Wildlife, North, West Bengal and the DFO, Baikunthapur Division. Comments of DFO should be suitably incorporated. You may have to give presentation on the research, if required.

11. List of all publications along with copies of the publications arising out of the study shall be furnished to the PCCF, WL & CWLW, W. B.

  
(Rajesh Kumar, IFS)  
Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Wildlife, West Bengal

No. 146 /WL/2M-115/2022

Date: 08-06-2022

Copy along with copy of survey proposal forwarded for information and taking necessary action to:

1. The Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife North, West Bengal.
2. The Divisional Forest Officer, Baikunthapur Division, West Bengal.

  
(Rajesh Kumar, IFS)  
Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
Wildlife, West Bengal



## Annexure-II

### Vulture Monitoring Team Details

Name	Contact Number	Whatsapp Number
Abdul Subhan	8918577073	9933095374
Md. Rashik Ali	9800081135	9800081135
Md Samir	9933588492	
Rejaul Karim	9679185515	9679185515
Sahid Anwar	7811881360	7811881360
Mujaffar Hossain	9933384607	
Ajjur Haque	9933669915	9932705047
Saher Ali	7865862251	7865862251
Md. Aisanul	8967352322	

### Project Team

Name	Designation
Mr. Koustav Choudhury	Project Leader
Miss. Shimu Saha	Co-Project Leader
Mr. Pradyut Roy	Operations Coordinator
Mr. Sanatan Goswami	Zoologist
Miss. Taniya Chowdhury	GIS Analyst
Mr. Sandeep Chowdhury	Field Assistant
Mr. Sujoy Ghosh	Field Assistant

## Annexure-III

### Media Publications

# Saving endangered vultures in Siliguri, SMC urged to act

SANKHA GHOSH  
SILIGURI, 1 OCTOBER

Wildlife conservationists and environmental activists have sought the intervention of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) in ensuring that the movement of the critically endangered vultures remains uninterrupted at the dumping grounds. The civic body dumps animal carcasses on the grounds located at Jatiakali in Fulbari on the outskirts of the town. The private ground measuring more than 20 acres falls under the Fulbari-II gram panchayat.

"During a 14-day count of the vulture population from January, we have found the highest number of 276 birds at Jatiakali. Most of them were the Himalayan griffon, while few were the slender-billed vultures and also White-rumped vultures. We are hopeful that the number of vultures has increased in the area. The vultures feed on cattle carcasses, but the dumping of carcasses has been irregular there for the past few days. The SMC dumps the carcasses on the grounds," said the chairman of the Solitary Nature & Animal Protection Foundation, Kaustabh Choudhury.

The organisation had conducted the study at Jatiakali using the point count sampling method, supported by the Wildlife Trust of India and the Baikunthapur forest division.

Representatives of the



SNAPF; Society for Protecting Ophiofauna & Animal Rights, and Optopic Siliguri met the chairperson of the board of administrators of the SMC, Gautam Deb, in this regard today.

According to them, vultures play a key role in the ecosystem as they are natural scavengers.

"We have expressed our concerns. The area should be protected for the vultures. The vulture is an endangered species and has been listed in Schedule-1 under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and its population in India is fast dwindling," Mr Choudhury said.

In Siliguri, the vulture pop-

ulation has faced a serious threat due to the rapid constructions, power lines, mobile towers and other anthropogenic disturbances, conservationists say.

"We apprised Mr Deb that there has been irregular dumping of carcasses, and there should be regular dumping instead of burial on the grounds to ensure availability of food for the vultures. We have requested him to identify an alternative dumping site that will be free from construction activities, if necessary," Mr Choudhury added.

"If constructions come up in the area, the movement of the vultures may be hit. In that case, an alternative ground will

be required for the vultures. A request has also been made to depute a person from the local area there, who will monitor their movement and protect them from stray dogs. The person may inform us or the forest department in case of any injury of the birds so that immediate steps can be taken. He has told us that he would look into the issue and will also hold a meeting on it," he said.

The conservationists also conducted sensitization programmes among the people at Jatiakali, Baikunthapur, Paharpur and other areas on the necessity to protect the birds of prey. Mr Choudhury said 34 vulture protection groups had been set up.

# শকুন বাঁচাতে পুরসভার দ্বারস্থ পরিবেশপ্রেমী

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা

## শিলিগুড়ি

মৃত পশুর দেহ নিয়মিত ফেলা হচ্ছে না নির্দিষ্ট ভাগাড়ে। অনেক সময় মাটিতে পুঁতে দেওয়া হচ্ছে। শিলিগুড়ি শহর লাগোয়া ফুলবাড়ির জটিয়াখালি এলাকায় ওই ভাগাড়ে শকুনের আনাগোনা সে কারণে কমেছে বলে অভিযোগ। শিলিগুড়ি পুরসভার তরফে শহরের মৃত পশুর দেহ সেখানে ফেলার ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে। শকুন বাঁচাতে তাই পরিবেশপ্রেমীদের একাংশ শিলিগুড়ি পুরসভার দ্বারস্থ হলেন। শুক্রবার পুর প্রশাসক বোর্ডের চেয়ারপার্সন গৌতম দেবের সঙ্গে দেখা করে তিনটি পরিবেশপ্রেমী সংস্থার সদস্যরা। তাদের অভিযোগ, ভাগাড়ে নিয়মিত মৃত পশুর দেহ ফেলা হচ্ছে না। এলাকায় প্রচুর বাড়ির নির্মাণ কাজ হওয়া, মোবাইল টাওয়ার, বিদ্যুতের বাইটেশন লাইনের টাওয়ার সেখানে বসানো হয়েছে। তাতে সমস্যা বেড়েছে। প্রশাসক বোর্ডের চেয়ারপার্সন জানান, বিষয়টি উদ্বেগজনক। কী করা যায় তা নিয়ে তিনি আলোচনা করবেন। শকুন বাঁচাতে তিনি উদ্যোগী হবেন।

## শকুন সংরক্ষণ

**শিলিগুড়ি:** জটিয়াখালিতে বিভিন্ন প্রজাতির শকুন সংরক্ষণের আর্জি নিয়ে শুক্রবার বন্যপ্রাণ নিয়ে কর্মরত সংস্থাগুলি শিলিগুড়ি পুরসভার দ্বারস্থ হল। এ দিন প্রশাসক বোর্ডের প্রধান গৌতম দেবের সঙ্গে দেখা করেন স্ন্যাপ, স্পোর এবং অপটিকের মত সংস্থাগুলি। স্ন্যাপের কর্ণধার কৌস্তভ চৌধুরী জানান, জটিয়াখালিতে বেসরকারি জমিতে চলা ভাগাড় ক্রমশ ছোট হয়ে আসছে। তার ফলে কয়েকটি প্রজাতির শকুন নিয়মিত ভাবে কমেছে এলাকা থেকে। তা সংরক্ষণের প্রয়োজন। তার জন্য পদক্ষেপ করুক শিলিগুড়ি পুরসভা। বিষয়টি শোনার পরে সংস্থাগুলির



# বিদ্যুতের তারে শকুনের মৃত্যু, দ্রুত ব্যবস্থার নির্দেশ

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা

## শিলিগুড়ি

হাই ভোল্টেজের তার উন্মুক্ত। তাতে ছোঁয়া লেগে একের পর এক শকুন মারা যাচ্ছে জটিয়াখালিতে। সূত্রের খবর, বিষয়টি নিয়ে চিন্তিত বন দফতর বিদ্যুৎ বর্টন সংস্থাকে চিঠি দিচ্ছে, এলাকায় অবিলম্বে তার প্লাস্টিক পাইপ দিয়ে মুড়ে দিতে।

সিনেরাস এবং হিমালয়ান গ্রিফন প্রজাতির অন্তত ৩০০ শকুন এখন ওই এলাকায় রয়েছে বলে বন দফতর সূত্রে দাবি। আগে ২০২০ সালে ওই এলাকায় শকুন সংরক্ষণ প্রকল্প হাতে নেয় বন্যপ্রাণ নিয়ে কর্মরত সংস্থা স্ল্যাপ। তার পর থেকে এলাকায় আধুনিক বিভিন্ন ধরনের সংরক্ষণ পদ্ধতি অবলম্বন করে অন্তত ৫০টি শকুনের সংখ্যা বাড়ানো হয়েছে বলে দাবি করছে সংস্থা।

তবে অভিযোগ উঠেছে, নভেম্বর থেকে এখনও পর্যন্ত বিদ্যুতের তারের ছোঁয়া লেগে তিনটি শকুন মারা গিয়েছে এবং তিনটি আহত হয়েছে। সেগুলিকে

বেঙ্গল সাফারিতে চিকিৎসার জন্য নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়েছে। সংসার কর্ণধার কৌস্তভ চৌধুরী বলেন, “আমরা বন দফতরের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছিলাম। ব্যবস্থা নেওয়ার আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন কর্তারা।”

এলাকায় আগে নিষিদ্ধ কীটনাশক চা বাগান গুলিতে ব্যবহার করা হত বলে অভিযোগ। তা নিয়ে সচেতনতার প্রচার চলেছে বছর দুয়েক হল। এলাকায় স্থানীয় মানুষদের নিয়ে শকুন সংরক্ষণের দল তৈরি করা হয়েছে। কিন্তু এখন বিপদ বাড়াচ্ছে বিদ্যুৎ বর্টন সংস্থার খোলা তার।

বৈকুণ্ঠপুর বন বিভাগের এলাকার মধ্যে পড়ছে জটিয়াখালির ওই ভাগাড় এলাকাটি। উত্তরবঙ্গের মুখ্য বনপাল (বন্যপ্রাণ) রাজেন্দ্র জাখর বলেন, “বৈকুণ্ঠপুরের ডিএফওকে এ বিষয়ে জানানো হয়েছে। বলা হয়েছে, বিদ্যুৎ দফতরে অবিলম্বে চিঠি দিতো” বন দফতর সূত্রে খবর, প্রায় এক কিলোমিটার এলাকায় খোলা তার অবিলম্বে প্লাস্টিক মোড়কের সাহায্যে মুড়ে ফেলার পরামর্শ দেওয়া হচ্ছে বিদ্যুৎ দফতরকে।