Vultures in South- and eastern southern Africa: Poisoning Impact and Trends

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Endangered Wildlife Trust

9th of April 2014
### IUCN Red list status of the Africa’s vultures (Mundy, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cape Griffon</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>Rare¹</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>VU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruppell’s Griffon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>EN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eurasian Griffon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>EN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>African W-b Vulture</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>EN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hooded Vulture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lappet-faced Vulture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>VU</td>
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<tr>
<td>White-headed Vulture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VU</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bearded Vulture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>(Africa?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian Vulture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EN</td>
<td>EN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm-nut Vulture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LC</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Rare- “small world population...not at present EN or VU, but are at risk”
### Regional Red Data List – RSA, Lesotho & Swaziland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>1984 (Brooke)</th>
<th>2000 (Barnes)</th>
<th>2014 (Taylor)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian Vulture</td>
<td>RE</td>
<td>RE</td>
<td>RE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African White-backed Vulture</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Griffon</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lappet-faced Vulture</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-headed Vulture</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooded Vulture</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>VU</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearded Vulture</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>EN</td>
<td>CR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm-nut Vulture</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rüppell’s Griffon</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>VA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regionally Extinct
• Critically Endangered
• Est 200-250
• Latest estimate – 92 breeding pairs
Vulture poisoning – A re-emerging Threat?

1996-2014

Graph showing the number of vulture poisonings from 1996 to 2014, with a peak in 2001.
Mortalities per Species

1996-2014

AWBV  |  CG  |  LFV  |  BV  |  HV  |  WHV  |  Unknown

0      |  500 |  450  |  400 |  350 |  300  |
# Bearded Vulture Mortalities 2000-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Class</th>
<th>Poisoned</th>
<th>Power-line</th>
<th>Trapped</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Fledgling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immature</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-adult</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Swartberg, KZN Midlands
July 2013
54 Cape Griffons, 1 AWBV
Aldicarb
Prosecution in process

Molteno, Eastern Cape
December 2013
46 Cape Griffons
Carbofuran
Prosecution in process
Recent incidents in southern Africa:

- Mozambique – 76 birds (June 2011)
- Zimbabwe – 174 birds (August 2012)
- Mkhuze, South Africa – 41 birds (Nov 2012)
- Mozambique – 84 birds (May 2013)
- Zambia – 302 birds (Oct 2013)
- Zimbabwe – 219 birds (Oct 2013)
- Imfolozi, South Africa – 37 birds (Nov 2013)
Muthi Trade

1 x Successful Prosecution
- Mkhuze GR, Zululand
- 2 Poachers arrested – Jan ‘13
- 7 x AWBV, 1 x Tawny Eagle
- 2 Years imprisonment, no optional fine – Sep ’13
• Rigid vetting and Assessment process
• Work done by Onderstepoort to assist in Asian Vulture Crisis – Diclofenac and Meloxicam assessments
• Assessment of other potentially lethal drugs
• Consultation with Conservation into Wildlife
• Bans on potentially lethal substances are imposed
• Concern – use of human medicines in desperate times could expose vultures to poisoning
Lead Poisoning

• Poorly studied and understood in SA
• Kempenfeldt and other incidents
• All Bearded Vulture samples analysed have high Pb-levels
• Large domestic and international hunting industry
• Conservation bodies – culling and PA Control
Vulture Tracking
Protected Areas

Vulture nests in Swaziland

(Monadjem & Garcelon 2005)
What is being done?

• Review and improvement in legislation
• Banning of certain substances:
  – Monocrotophos – 2005
  – Aldicarb – 2014 (in process)
• Support and guidance to Law Enforcement
• Proper investigation and prosecution procedures
• Training of Conservation and Agricultural staff
• Interaction with Traditional Healers Organisations
• Awareness of Public Health Risks
• Veterinary medicine control regulations
• Stockpiles programme
Supplementary Vulture Feeding Sites

- Aka “Vulture Restaurants”
- Initiated in 1970’s
- Safe, reliable source of food
- 187 sites across South Africa
- Not subject to permits or legislation
- Requires careful management
- Perceptions
Rehabilitation & Captive Breeding
Awareness materials
Vulture Information Leaflets

- www.ewt.org.za
- Updated format
- Translations – Sesotho, isiZulu, etc.
Can we still afford to work in isolation?

- Vultures are highly mobile
- Cross international boundaries at will
- Not restricted to protected area network
- Poisoning is a wide-ranging problem
- Reasons for poison use varied
- Not all substances can be banned
- Challenges are similar
- Greater awareness and vigilance is needed
- Capacity to share skills and expertise
- Focus on all levels of intervention and mitigation
- Obtain broad-based political and governmental understanding and support
- Quantify the value of vultures to Africans

- Work together, despite differences and challenges!
The time to act is NOW!
Contact details

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- Endangered Wildlife Trust
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