Meet Ostrava, born in Ostrava Zoo in the Czech Republic. He is one of 3 Cinereous Vultures released in the Eastern Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria in July as a part of the Vultures Back to Life project. The species was declared extinct as a breeding species there in the 1980s. Ostrava left the release site in November and is currently in Greece.

Photo: Irina Pashkova/FWFF

The team at the Vulture Conservation Foundation wishes you a very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Over 2018 we were part of some fantastic achievements, here are just a few:

- 13 captive-bred Bearded Vultures were released in reintroduction projects across Europe, from the Swiss and Austrian Alps to France’s Pre-Alps (Basses Alpes), here as part of the LIFE funded GypConnect project, and in Andalucia and Maestrazgo, Spain. The latter is a new reintroduction project.
- The first 5 Cinereous Vultures were released in Bulgaria in a historic reintroduction project as part of the Vultures Back to Life project.
- The EU formally approved the Cinereous and Bearded Vulture international species action plans we developed under the LIFE funded EuroVulture project.
- With funding from the MAVA Foundation we officially launched our Balkan Anti-Poisoning Project, working across five Balkan countries to engage stakeholders to prevent this insidious practice and protect vultures.
- 5 Cinereous Vultures were released in the Geige du Verdon and 2 in Basse Alpes, France, bringing the total of birds released there to 81 since 2004.
- A new record was set in the Alps with 31 breeding Bearded Vulture pairs, that successfully fledged 29 young birds. The wild population there is firmly established and growing!
- The pilot test different methods of release of captive-bred Egyptian Vultures in Bulgaria was successful with 4 of the 7 birds making it to their wintering grounds in Chad, Ethiopia and Sudan.
- 26 Griffon Vultures were released in South Africa boosting the threatened population on the island as part of the LIFE Under Griffen Wings project.
- 62 Griffon Vultures successfully fledged in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains under the LIFE Re Vultures project.
- Dracon and Rupis, two wild Egyptian Vultures from the Dracon Canyon, successfully made it to their wintering grounds in Mali and Senegal, and are being tracked through the GPS transmitters fitted as part of LIFE Rupis project.

Thank you for your support. All Together, we can look back to a great year 4 vultures!

www.4vultures.org
info@4vultures.org
Cinereous Vulture

Aegypius monachus

Bright Future for Black Vulture LIFE14 NAT/BG/649
With the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Commission

FIRST RELEASE OF 2018

in Bulgaria to Restore the National Population – Hotel, July 2018
Poison

Vet Medicines

Availability Carcasses
Post Bovine spongiform encephalopathy

Illegal killing

Energetic infrastructures
INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON VULTURES & VETERINARY DRUGS

19-20 FEBRUARY 2019
DADIA, GREECE
Introduction

- **Aim:** To clarify current state of play regarding existence, usage and legal context for vet drug diclofenac in Europe
  - Legal status
  - Past advocacy
  - Current state of play
  - Future perspectives
Vet Diclofenac in Europe - an update

Diclofenac: non-steroid anti-inflammatory vet drug (NSAID)

Vet Diclofenac caused a decline of 97-99% of several species of Gyps vultures in the Indian sub-continent in 15 years (1992-2007)

Vet Diclofenac is now legally sold and available in several European countries

There are equally effective alternatives in the market

Legal sale of vet Diclofenac in Europe poses a risk for European vultures and creates a precedent for other regions in the world
Vet Diclofenac is toxic for vultures

- Causes kidney failure
- Death in two days
- LD50 (dose causing death to 50% of vultures exposed to certain doses): 0.098 to 0.225 mg/kg
- India: <1% of contaminated carcasses could cause a 99.9% decline in white-backed vulture
- Toxicity lasts up to 1 week after treatment
- Withdrawal periods prescribed for vet Diclofenac: 12 days for pork and 15 days for bovine cattle
Vet Diclofenac in Europe

- Produced by Italian company FATRO
- Used in bovine cattle, pork and horses, under veterinary prescription, and application by vets (intravenous injection) or under vet surveillance (intramuscular injection)
- Used to treat lactating infections, respiratory diseases (bronchopneumonia) and muscular or bone pathologies (tendinitis, myositis, arthritis)
- Authorised since 1993 in Italy, and after 2009 in some other European countries (Estonia, Czech republic, Latvia)
- 2013 legally authorised in Spain
- Currently a request for legal permit in Portugal
Vet Diclofenac in Spain (95% of European vultures)

- Between 9,460-27,700 animals have been treated with vet Diclofenac in Spain during the first year of commercialisation
- 10% of Diclofenac used in extensive cattle raising
- Mortality - Spanish government own estimates: 15 - 39 griffons/year
- Green & Margalida (2014): potentially up to 683-4,792 griffons/year
- Spanish griffon population: 30,000 breeding pairs, 150,000-200,000 individuals
Vet Diclofenac in Europe - time line

- 2013 - approved in Spain (Diclovit & Dolofenac)
- December 2013 - VCF informed
- January 2014 - VCF & other conservation organisations (BirdLife, WCS) ask the EU to ban the sale of vet Diclofenac
- March 2014 - VCF & others contact FATRO and ask for a voluntary withdrawal from the market - refused
- 2014 - VCF & others start a campaign. Petition (50,000 signatures). UICN, CMS, WCS, EAZA, SCB, OIE, etc
Why a campaign?

- Poison
- Diclofenac
- Availability Carcasses
- Post Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
- Illegal killing
- Energetic infrastructures
Den Geiern droht Gefahr

Eine Armee für Räuber hat die Geierpopulationen Indiens fast ausgerottet. Nun kommt sie auch in Spanien auf den Markt, wo 85 Prozent der europäischen Geier leben. Von Hansjakob Basaglia

Das Sterben der Totengräber

Ein erstaunlich heimtückisches Medikament für Totenhände gefährdet Aufseher – vor allem in Spanien. Kleine Geier und Adler droht sogar Aussterben

Lozère: Für die Impots, tout devient plus facile avec internet

Lozère: Pour les impôts, tout devient plus facile avec internet

Troubles de l’équilibre : les kinés peuvent aider

En Lozère, les professionnels ont fait état de ce que la collaboration est bénéfique pour les patients et les professionnels.

Faune

Un des otages libérés raconte leur détention

Sud-Ouest

Le retour de l’enfant prodigue

Musique

Le rogap de fondeur d’Aubert pour Besalubecs

Conservation of Black and Griffon vultures in the cross-border Rhodopes mountains
Diclofenac the Vulture killing drug is now available on EU market BAN IT NOW!

Vulture culture at threat from diclofenac

Europe’s vultures under threat from drug that killed millions of birds in Asia

Conservation of Black and Griffon vultures in the cross-border Rhodopes mountains
Vet Diclofenac in Europe - time line

- August 2014 - The EU asks the European Medicine Agency (EMA) for a scientific advice
- Oct-November 2014 - Public consultation. Contributions from VCF and others
- December 2014 - Decision by the EMA
  • Acknowledges there is a confirmed risk for vultures and other scavenging birds in the EU
  • Two exposition scenarios identified a) supplementary feeding stations supplied with materials outside the regulations/ slaughterhouses; b) animals « abandoned » dead in the fields
Decision EMA

☑ Additional risk management measures are needed
  ▪ Information to veterinarians
  ▪ Warnings in the product documentation
  ▪ Changing the product administration configuration
  ▪ Increasing checks on farms
  ▪ Sampling plan in the wild

☑ Removing diclofenac from the EU
  ▪ EMA has not been able to evaluate the effectiveness of all the measures proposed - it cannot be quantified at the moment or does not fall within its competence.
  ▪ As a result, EMA did not make a recommendation on which of them would be the most appropriate.
  ▪ “Efforts should focus on determining the most appropriate and effective ones to ensure that contaminated carcasses do not end up in the food chain of vultures and other scavenging birds”
Diclofenac in Europe - time line

- December 2014 - decision by EMA
- February 2015 - UE decides, after consultation with member states, to not ban the vet drug, and asks member states to develop action plans, to be presented in April 2015
- June 2015 - national action plans submitted to the EU
National Mitigation Plans - Spain

- Spain takes few measures
- Amend the labelling - a general sentence stating that Diclofenac should not be administered to animals that will be consumed by wildlife
- Send a note to veterinarians
- Set up a system to test sick and dead vultures.
- Spain explicitly decides not to change the prescription method.
National Mitigation Plans - France

- "In France, there is no DICLOFENAC"
- "Wait times established to protect the health of the consumer, 12 days for pigs and 15 days for cattle, can be considered equally safe for vultures"
- "When vultures are fed with slaughterhouse waste, the risk is considered zero"
- "When vultures feed on carcasses of dead animals" in the field (extensive breeding, summer mountain pasture), the risk is considered low because DICLOFENAC is a product that is not suited to extensive livestock farming because several individual administrations out of several days are needed"
- "When vultures feed on feeding stations fed by carcasses of dead animals on the farm, a risk to the vultures is identified if these animals die within 10 days of treatment with DICLOFENAC"
National Mitigation Plans - Bulgaria

- Measures to be taken by the competent authority - Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA):
  - In case of submission of an application, environmental impact of the specific veterinary products to assess accurately the benefit / risk balance
  - After meeting of the above mentioned conditions, the product information shall be provided with warnings and special precautions for use of the product, such as: "product can not be used in animals that go to pasture" or "an withdrawal period of 28 days should be observed regarding animals that have been treated with VMPs containing diclofenac before going to pasture
  - Compulsory “subject to medical prescription” of any authorised veterinary product containing diclofenac;
  - Publications in the veterinary professional editions of the BFSA informing college about the risk
  - Respect the withdrawal period of 28-day after treating animals with veterinary medicinal product containing diclofenac in food producing animals
Informing the competent veterinary authorities about the measures recommended by the EMA and the particular situation of Greece regarding populations of necrophagous birds

Implementation of official controls in the existing feeding sites for vultures in Dadia, Kalambaka and Crete

Implementation of official sampling for detection of diclofenac in tissue of dead animals intended for feed of necrophagous birds

Close cooperation and communication of veterinary services with GREEK ORNITHOLOGICAL CORPORATION on common information and education activities.

In addition, we clarify that there is no veterinary medicine containing diclofenac that have been authorised in Greece.
Vet Diclofenac in Europe - time line

- 2017-2018: Projects trying to find diclofenac in carcasses and vultures
- 2018: renewal for Diclofenac in Spain & request for sale in Portugal
- 2017-2018: New campaign. Coordinating Partner: BirdLife International, with SEO/BirdLife (BLI Spain); SPEA (BLI Portugal), WWF Spain, VCF
Outputs

• International campaign in 4 languages and raise awareness amongst key sectors in Spain, Italy and Portugal.

• Strong policy and advocacy campaign in Spain (vets, farmers, regional govts.)

• Proportionally smaller, but still relevant, policy and advocacy work in Portugal and Italy

• EU Advocacy with DG Environment and DG Health and Food Safety to encourage greater support for a ban on diclofenac.
Policy & Advocacy

- Position papers & Manifestos agreed with several sectors (Farmers, Vets, Tourism companies, Regional Govt, Cities)
- Spanish Ombudsman
- EU DG SANTE and DG ENV
- International NGOs
- Socioeconomic valuation of Vultures
  - Citizens: 20,000
  - Organizations: 300

https://vimeo.com/226414455
Diclofenac in Europe - the future

Lobbying

Member States to improve their action plans

Field sampling ("smoking gun")

In Andalusia, only 15% of all "suspect" vulture corpses were tested against the presence of diclofenac (5 vultures in 2014-2015)

Beyond Vet Diclofenac

✓ Veterinary drugs (NSAIDs, euthanasia agents, antibiotics) - probably a bigger threat than we think we know

✓ EU risk assessment guidelines + vulture toxicity tests for existing and new drugs
Follow the news

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