



## VULTURE PROGRAMME MONTHLY REPORT

November 2017

The first week of November was spent in preparing our 35 vultures for their release on the 8 November. This release brought together the culmination of our work over the last 5 years where we released 17 captive bred Cape Vultures bred at VulPro and three bred at the National Zoological Gardens (Pretoria Zoo). Rehabilitated vultures were also released at the same time. Each vulture was fitted with a tracking device in which to monitor their movements and their successes and/or failures. This release marked the biggest single release of vultures of its kind across the globe and we look forward to keeping you all updated on their progress. Having said that, the first 3 weeks were spent running around monitoring each vulture and sometimes, even rescuing them from near death situations as in the case of 2 captive bred vultures caught for the muti trade. I am happy to say both birds were rescued, survived and will be re-released during the first week of December. A press release on the mass vulture release is available on request as well as a full report on all our monitoring work associated with these birds. This reports highlights specific areas where we have personally investigated.

## MEETINGS AND EVENTS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Met with</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Project title/reference/purpose</b>
09/11/2017	Scott Tidmus	Disney Animal Kingdom and AZA Raptor Tag	Collaboration and assistance with regards to supporting our work and conservation programmes with both in kind, volunteer and financial assistance.	Collaboration and sponsor
14/11/2017	Lizanne Nel	SA Hunters	Collaboration and showcasing VulPro as one of their chosen charities	Collaboration and sponsor
15/11/2017	Yolan Friedmann	Endangered Wildlife Trust	NGO update and catch up meeting	NGO collaboration
16/11/2017	Ara Monadjem	Associated scientist with UP and Prof at University of Swaziland	Research discussions and project updates around existing and future collaboration with regards to research work	Scientific committee member and research collaborator
21/11/2017	Chris Styles	Supporter and Die Ou Pastorie in Skreepoort restaurant	Project update and discussion around further assistance and financial support through his connections	Fundraising
27-28/11/2017	Rufford Foundation African conference	Rufford Foundation	Annual conference whereby project partners meet each other and share their conservation projects	Conference

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27/11/2017	Chris Brown, John Mendelson, Kenneth Uiseb, Maria Diekmann and Bernette Louw	Namibia: NNF, MET, landowners and scientists	Discussion around vulture conservation in Namibia	Namibian vulture conservation

### **Media**

Ongoing media, awareness and exposure through Facebook and Twitter, as well as other social media throughout November; with 5000 followers on Kerri Wolter's profile and 8091 on VulPro's Facebook page. We have 993 followers on Twitter and 368 followers on Instagram.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Comment</b>
03/11/2017	"Vulture release and preparation"	Obsessively Creative	awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure regarding the release and what it entails to prep birds for the greatest chance of survival success
09/11/2017	"Vulture release"	BBC Wildlife Magazine	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on vulture conservation and the work we undertake
09/11/2017	"Deurbraak vir aasvoel bewaring"	Beeld – YouTube	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on our mass vulture release
09/11/2017	"35 Bedreigde aasvoels pro uitendelike Vryheid"	Netwerk 24 – Beeld	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on our mass vulture release
09/11/2017	"Vulture release"	Radio Today	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on our mass vulture release
14/11/2017	"Setting free the vultures"	Discover Wildlife	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on our mass vulture release
14/11/2017	"Kyk bedreigde aasvoels vlieg vry"	Komorant	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on our mass vulture release

16/11/2017	"Carprofen study"	Radio FM	Awareness and educational info	Awareness and educational insert on the effects of drugs to vultures
24/11/2017	"Newly released vulture almost muti"	Komorant	Awareness	Awareness as to the threat of the muti trade
November 2017	"Hooded vultures"	Olifants North Game Reserve newsletter	Awareness	Awareness around our vulture tree nesting surveys and marking methods in the Olifants River Private Nature Reserve covering both Olifants North and South.
30/11/2017	"Mass release"	WAZA news flash	Awareness and exposure	Awareness and exposure on our mass vulture release

## CONSERVATION

### A. DIRECT ACTIVITIES

#### *Rehabilitation*

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
8/11/2017		Released 35 vultures at the Nooitgedacht vulture release site and Cape Vulture breeding colony	Monitoring of each individual bird. This data will be analysed and written up in due course.	20 Captive bred CVs, 12 rehabilitated CVs, 2 AWB vultures and 1 Lappet-faced vulture were released. All with tracking devices for monitoring purposes.
10/11/2017		Euthanaized the male Black Eagle	N/A	The male Black Eagle which came in a couple of years ago with bad bumble-foot was showing signs of discomfort. His bumble-foot had flared up again and he was in pain due to his old wing injury. It was the kindest thing to do i.e letting him go as his quality of life was not acceptable.

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
11/11/2017	01.11	Collected an adult CV from a tiny little town in Limpopo Province called Alma	Monitoring for release	The bird was showing signs of poisoning. We tested him for lead poisoning which came back negative. We put him on a course of antibiotics, stabilised him and gave him tlc. He has been moved to our release enclosure at Nooigedacht where we hope to release him during the first week in December.
11-13/11/2017	02.11	Recaptured 6 released CVs over 3 days	Monitoring for release	All 6 of these birds found themselves grounded and below the colony in an area where they could not take off and thermal back up to the colony. We recaptured them and transported them back to the release enclosure at Nooitgedacht where they will be released (2 at a time) during the first week of December)
12/11/2017	03.11	Collected a young Sparrow Hawk from Red Ivory in Hartbeespoort	Monitoring for release	The little Sparrow Hawk fell out of its nest and was rescued before the dogs killed him. As the nest was inaccessible we were asked to help. He has since been moved to his release site for a soft release.
13/11/2017		Arranged to collect an injured AWB vulture from the Northern Cape but before we got there, the bird died	N/A	The bird was grounded due to a broken wing from flying into power lines. He was dehydrated and emaciated from being grounded for a while. Unfortunately we never had the opportunity to treat him as he died before our arrival.

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
14/11/2017	04.11	Collected a grounded CV fledgling from the Coves in Hartbeespoort	Monitoring for release	It is that time of year when the fledglings leave their breeding ledges and some become grounded due to weather and heat conditions. This fledgling was no exception and is being fed up in prep for his release. He has been tagged already for visual monitoring and re-sightings once released.
15/11/2017	05.11	Collected a young Gabar from the North West Province, near Vryberg	Monitoring for release	The little Gabar fledgling fell out of his nest. His sibling died and he was rescued by the landowner who raised him for 2 weeks until he could come through to us. He has since been moved to his release site just outside of Brits in prep for his soft release.
16/11/2017	06.11	Collected an adult CV which was stuck inside a dry concrete dam near Lichtenberg	Monitoring for release	The CV was emaciated, dehydrated and super stressed. Three other CV carcasses were found in the same dam. He has been treated for stress, dehydration and being fed up.
16/11/2017	07.11	Collected a grounded CV fledgling from the Magaliesberg Golf Park in Hartbeespoort	Monitoring for release	Another fledgling was grounded and found himself trapped between bush and unable to get out. He is being fed up in preparation for his release and has already been tagged for visual sightings.
18/11/2017		CV found dead, stuck on a wishbone power line structure in Sondela near the Nysvlei Nature Reserve	Monitoring the mitigation of the power line structure	The CV was electrocuted and then found stuck on the structure. This was reported to Eskom for immediate assistance i.e to remove the hanging vulture off the structure.

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
18/11/2017	08.11	Collected a grounded CV fledgling from the Coves in Hartbeespoort	Monitoring for release	Another fledgling was grounded, again in the same place as the previous fledgling. He is being fed up in preparation for his release. He has already been tagged for visual sightings.
18 and 21/11/2017	09.11	Recaptured another two of our released vultures	Monitoring for release	Recaptured 320 and 342 as they were found below the colony and unable to thermal up to the top. Both are now inside the release enclosure and will be released shortly.
21/11/2017	10.11	Collected and saved one of our released captive bred vultures from Lesotho and the muti trade	Monitoring for release	The press release refers but this bird flew to Lesotho and was captured for the muti trade. We managed to rescue and save him.
23/11/2017	11.11	Recaptured CV 325 who was close to Soweto	Monitoring for release	The bird was grounded with loads of feather damage and we are unsure why. He is back at VulPro for monitoring purposes.
23/11/2017		Electrocuted CV found in the Lichtenberg Nature Reserve	Monitoring for mitigation.	The bird was found dead, electrocuted under a municipal structure and caused a veld fire in the reserve. This has been reported to the local municipality in the area.
28/11/2017	12.11	Captured an injured AWB vulture which flew to VulPro. The little guy has a broken leg from a gin trap	Monitoring for improvement	The bird's leg is sliced open to the bone and the bone has snapped. However this is an old injury and the bird has been surviving with this wound. We are doing all we can to try make him comfortable. He is now on a course of antibiotics and we are monitoring him and looking at surgical options to save his life.

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
28/11/2017	13.11	Recaptured another released CV from below Nooitgedacht again	Monitoring for release	Again another of our released birds unable to thermal up to the top of the mountain and thus we assisted him. He is back at VulPro as he was super hungry but will be moved to the release enclosure during December for his second release attempt.

### ***Vulture breeding statistics: Captive and wild***

Date	Project title	Location	Comment
November 2017	Captive breeding programme	VulPro	<p>To-date, 6 CV nestlings have now fledged inside our breeding enclosure. They will be moved to the rehab enclosure in a month's time.</p> <p>The second and last AWB vulture has also fledged but as he was nervous and could not figure out how to get back onto his ledge, we assisted him and he has not left his ledge again. He has been tagged in prep for his release and will also be moved into the rehab enclosure shortly together with the oldest AWB vulture fledgling.</p>

### ***Research***

Date	Project title	Location	Comment
16/11/2017	Power line survey	Molemane Eyes Reserve	A brief power line survey was undertaken on a farm near Lichtenberg, this consisted of just 5 structures. No fatalities were found and almost no signs of usage by vultures recorded.
November 2017	Vulture restaurant database	VulPro	Continued to update the vulture restaurant database. This database is currently being used for 2 PhD studies which we are thrilled about, in collaboration with the UCT

Date	Project title	Location	Comment
November 2017	Vulture re-sighting database	VulPro	Continued to update the re-sighting database
November 2017	Vulture tracking device studies	Southern Africa	Continue to monitor the vultures with tracking devices and assess their movements and investigate any stationary positions.

### ***Education & Training***

Date	Activity	Project title	Location	Comment
06/11/2017	Roots & Shoots After School Programme	Presentation	Kameeldrift Primary School	Gave a presentation to the whole school (350) on the importance of joining the VulPro / Roots & Shoots after school programme in 2018.
09-22/11/2017	Prof. Adyinka from Nigeria	Training	VulPro	VulPro trained our second Nigerian guest on different aspects of vulture conservation (rehab, power line surveys, nest monitoring, vulture restaurants etc). We are extremely honoured and proud to be able to provide training and assistance into other African countries.
17/11/2017	Educational tour	Tour	VulPro	An adoptive family (4 guests) came to visit their adopted vulture, toured the centre and spent some time observing the wild birds feeding.
18/11/2017	Educational tour	Tour	VulPro	A large family with friends (14 guests) toured the Centre and learnt about the work we undertake and the reasons why we need to conserve vultures.
20/11/2017	Educational and awareness tour and presentation	Educational and awareness	VulPro	A group of 40 guests from an Eco Club toured VulPro and attended the presentation. They enjoyed the morning learning about vultures, their importance and the work we carry out.
22/11/2017	After School Programme graduation	Year end closing	Bonanza	18 Children and 6 adults attended the Roots and Shoots/VulPro graduation. Learners spent the afternoon at a venue with a swimming pool and jumping castles, and received certificates.

Date	Activity	Project title	Location	Comment
25/11/2017	Adoptions and Brick campaign	Adoptions and Brick Campaign	VulPro	2 Vulture adoptive parents visited the centre with their families (10 people) to meet and name their adopted vultures. To date- The brick campaign has resulted in just over 200 bricks being "adopted".
30/11/2017	Community service	Community service	VulPro	Four girls from Parktown high school undertook their first 10 hours of community service at VulPro. They each have 20 hours to complete and they will come back on the 4 December to undertake their next 10 hours. Super girls and hard workers.

### ***Hide booking***

- 22/11/2017 Shirley Buckley (4)
- 26/11/2017 Anita Zanin (3)

### ***Administration and Pending***

- Collection of donated carcasses
- Maintenance of VulPro vehicles
- Ongoing treatment and care of vultures and birds of prey at VulPro.
- Ongoing care for captive vultures and supplementary feeding of wild birds at Nooitgedacht.
- Fundraising
- Report writing
- Proposal submissions to various funders
- Press release writing
- Administration
- Vulture restaurant feeding at the Vulture Centre
- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter updates
- Maintenance
- Management of volunteers and students
- Management of the vulture hide and bookings
- Management of HR issues
- Management of VulPro as a whole
- Management and co-ordination of vulture research
- Maintain updated captive breeding and rehabilitation records
- Continual updates to website, including range maps of tracked birds, sponsor logos, and publications.