



VULTURE PROGRAMME MONTHLY REPORT

December 2018

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Date	Met with	Representing	Purpose	Project title/reference/purpose
04/12/2018	TUT students	University of Tshwane	Further interviews were held with 3 TUT students in which to discuss their placement work experience year coming up.	Student placements
10/12/2018	Staff	VulPro	Discussion around the festive season's working duties and final research before the year ends	Work duties and research
20/12/2018	Selina Betts	Student	Discussion around Selina focusing and showcasing VulPro as her chosen case study for species awareness	Awareness project
13/12/2018	Michael Mole	MAPSS	To discuss the development of a database for VulPro's research	Database development
13/12/2018	Jaco Snyman	Enterprises	To discuss the development of a machine for crushing bones to feed to vultures, and the development of a powerline structure to use as an aversion therapy technique to prevent released vultures using powerlines	Development of techniques
31/12/2018	Lara Jordan	VulPro	Discussion around the resighting database and conflict issues	Research

Media

Ongoing media, awareness and exposure through Facebook and Twitter, as well as other social media throughout December; with 5000 followers on Kerri Wolter's profile and 10 463 on VulPro's Facebook page. We have 1138 followers on Twitter and 623 followers on Instagram.

Date	Media	Publisher	Purpose	Comment
02/12/2018	"Vulture rehabilitation season"	Hartebeesfontein Conservancy Newsletter 111	Exposure and awareness	Article on our rehabilitation season with specific emphasis on the fledglings leaving their nests for the first time and finding themselves in difficult areas where they cannot safely take off and fly again
08/12/2018	"Man's new best friend"	Kormorant	Exposure and awareness	Article on vulture adoptions and how one vulture has become a man's best friend
09/12/2018	"Vulture tracking"	Birdlife Free State Newsletter	Exposure and awareness	Article featuring captive bred CV319 and his movements into the Free State after

				being released at the Nooitgedacht vulture restaurant.
19/12/2018	“Interessante Besoeke”	Leloko Magazine Issue 5	Exposure and awareness	Article featuring a vulture which was collected from Leloko as he had landed in a landowner’s garden and was unable to take off. VulPro came to the bird and landowner’s assistance.
25/12/2018	“Kommer oor veiligheid van jong aasvoel”	Netwerk 24	Exposure and awareness	Article asking for information about a Cape Vulture fledgling seen on the N1 highway near a tollgate and possibly being picked up but no confirmation.

CONSERVATION

A. DIRECT ACTIVITIES

Rehabilitation

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
04/12/2018	01.12	Collected a Cape Vulture fledgling from Leopard Lodge	Monitoring for release	The young CV was incredibly thin and dehydrated as well as suffering from heat stress/stroke. She started having seizures and was treated accordingly. She has improved but still not ready for release as the heat still affects her.
05/12/2018	02.12	Collected an adult Cape Vulture from the Hekpoort area	Released and monitoring movements via its tracking device	The bird came in dehydrated and suffering from heat stress, after he was attacked by the landowner’s dogs. He was treated accordingly. Before release he was fitted with a tracking device to monitor movements from a confirmed breeding male from the Magaliesberg colony.
05/12/2018		Collected Cape Vulture from Green Leaves	Released 11/12/2018 and movements are being monitored	Emaciation, Dehydration and Grounded
06/12/2018	03.12	Collected a young Cape Vulture fledgling from Leopard Lodge once again	N/A	This young bird has one dislocated leg and one broken leg. Given her injuries, we had no choice but to let her go. Suspected calcium deficiency.

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
06/12/2018	04.12	Collected a juvenile African White-backed vulture from the VulPro vulture restaurant	Monitoring for release	Interestingly, this bird has lost most of its flight feathers and was unable to gain height whilst flying. He will need to grow new feathers before being able to be released. He has been ringed in the meantime and we hope to fit a tracking device to him in due course before his eventual release.
07/12/2018	05.12	Collected an adult male weaver	Monitoring for resightings	This little guy had head trauma possibly from flying into a window. He was treated and after a week, was successfully released.
08/12/2018	06.12	Young Sparrow Hawk was brought into the centre after falling out of nest and being attacked by dogs	He was sent to another facility where his feathers could grow out in preparation for his release.	Injuries were superficial and were topically treated.
09/12/2018	07.12	Collected a African White-backed vulture from the VulPro vulture restaurant	N/A	Unfortunately on collection the bird had already died. We are awaiting the PM results.
10/12/2018	08.12	Collected Cape Vulture from Green Leaves in Skeerpoort after it was found in a field, where workers were beating him on the head	Monitoring for resightings	The bird was rehydrated, treated accordingly and released on the 21 December 2018 at the Nooitgedacht vulture colony and feeding site.
11/12/2018		Released another 4 CV fledglings and 1 AWB at the Nooitgedacht vulture colony and restaurant. Three of which were fitted with tracking devices	Monitoring GPS tracking Movements and visual resightings	All birds were successfully released
12/12/2018	09.12	Collected a Cape Vulture fledgling from Nooitgedacht	Monitoring for release	The bird came in dehydrated and with head stress/stroke. Interesting to note is this particular bird came in with a a skew beak so we are monitoring to make sure he can eat and fend for himself at a carcass feeding before being released. In the meantime, he has been fitted with a tracking device to monitor his movements once he has been released.
13/12/2018		Released 3 Cape Vultures at Nooitgedacht	Monitoring for re-sightings and GPS movements	All birds were successfully released with one being a sixth attempt (captive bred CV).

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
13/12/2018	10.12	White-headed vulture which was captive bred at the Lory Park Zoo was brought in. This individual had broken its legs and had undergone surgery, but was experiencing complications.	N/A	This individual had broken both its legs and had undergone surgery, but was experiencing complications. One of the legs was re-operated on in a marathon 6 hour surgery but 4 days later it was decided to humanely let this bird go to bluer skies as it was believed the bird would never perch or possibly walk. Unknown causes.
15/12/2018	11.12	Collected a young and malformed African White-backed Vulture from the Loskop Dam area	N/A	This young AWB came in with singed feathers, deformed wings, super skinny but a character of note. He initially did extremely well and put on weight easily and quickly however after a week, he started coughing. We put him on a course of antibiotics, kept him rehydrated but his body started giving up. We lost him on Boxing Day.
15/12/2018	13.12	Collected a Cape Vulture fledgling from Skeerpoort	Monitoring for release	This bird came in with heat stroke resulting in seizures. He was treated with IV fluids and is still being monitored to make sure there is no relapse.
18/12/2018	11.12	Collected Long-Crested Eagle from NZG after it had recovered from a blood parasite	Monitoring for release	This individual has made a full recovery and will be released back into the wild shortly
18/12/2018	14.12	Collected CV from the coves in Hartbeespoort after it had landed in the dam	Monitoring for visual resightings	The bird was stabilised, fed up and released on the 21 December 2018 at the Nooitgedacht vulture colony and feeding site.
18/12/2018		Investigated a report of a CV being stuck in a thorn tree close to MagaliesPark	Individual was seen, but flew off	Individual was a young fledgling, attempting to find thermals. His flight was strong so we hope that he will not have any further difficulties
18/12/2018		Searched for a CV at the Magalies Resort where he was reported sitting on the compost heap	Magalies Resort staff continue to monitor the area to see if the individual does reappear	Individual disappeared into thick reeds, after being chased by an Emu.
18/12/2018		Searched for CV at Pecanwood estate after receiving reports from residents	Bird not found	The area was searched, but the bird was not found
20/12/2019	15.12	Collected a Cape Vulture fledgling from Skeerpoort	Monitoring for improvement and potential release	Individual came in dehydrated and thin. He is being fed up and will be released shortly

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
21/12/2018		Released Captive bred CV 323 at Nooitgedacht	Monitoring GPS tracking movements of 323.	CV323 was released successfully at Nooitgedacht and has remained at the colony to-date
23/12/2018	16.12	Collected a Cape Vulture fledgling from Brakpan in Johannesburg	N/A..	The bird came in dehydrated and with severe heat stroke. She experienced seizures and after giving IV fluids, Kortico and helping to stabilise her temperature, she continued to seizure with no breaks in between. We decided it was time to let her go humanely as her body could no longer deal with continuous seizures.
25/12/2018	17.12	Collected a Cape Vulture fledgling from Thabazimbi with a broken wing	The bird will unfortunately have to remain in captivity	Due to the bone sticking out of its wing, the wing had to be amputated to avoid infection and a slow death to the bird. However he will remain at VulPro for future breeding. A report has already been sent to Eskom for the structures and lines to be mitigated.
25/12/2018	18.12	Collected an adult Cape Vulture from the VulPro vulture restaurant	Monitoring for recovery	The adult has a broken wing from a power line collision. It is not sure though where the collision has taken place. X-rays will be undertaken in due course when the vets reopen and a decision will be taken whether the wing can be pinned or whether the break is too close to the joint for a successful fix.
27/12/2018	19.12	Collected injured Cape Vulture behind the Sunway low cost housing scheme in Rietfontein in the North West Province	Monitoring for recovery	Individual seems to have a possible dislocation. X-Rays will be taken in order to determine the true nature of the injury. Suspected powerline collision injury.
29/12/2018	20.12	Collected a grounded adult Cape Vulture from Pecanwood	Monitoring for release	The bird was found dehydrated with no additional injuries. He was treated with IV fluids.
30/12/2018	21.12	Searched and collected CV319 from Bloemhof in the North West Province	Monitoring for release	The bird was being monitored via its GPS tracking device and after 6 days of stationery points, a search took place and the bird captured. Apart from not gaining much height for unknown reasons, the bird appears to be in good condition. A full examination will take place to try understand the lack of movements from this bird after months of free flying.

Date	MR Ref	Activity	Follow up	Comment
30/12/2018	22.12	Collected a grounded Cape Vulture fledgling from Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape	Monitoring for release	The bird was found grounded and emaciated. It appears he got a little last after he left his breeding ledge at one of the Eastern Cape colonies. He is being fed up and treated for lice and dehydration.
31/12/2018	23.12	Collected an injured White-backed Vulture from around Mookgophong area in the Limpopo Province	Monitoring for recovery	The bird was found weak and dehydrated with an injured leg.

Research

Date	Project title	Location	Comment
December 2018	Vulture re-sighting database	VulPro	Continued to update the re-sighting database. Including repeat individuals, we have recorded 35 665 re-sightings to date.
December 2018	Vulture tracking device studies	Southern Africa	Continue to monitor the vultures with tracking devices and assess their movements and investigate any stationery positions. Currently there are still 15 active with cellular tracking units and 7 active transmitters with Movebank
11 th to 14 th December 2018	NSAID Toxicity Study	VulPro	A collaboration between University of Pretoria, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (England) and VulPro saw the testing of a NSAID drug. This is the 7 th drug of its type to be tested for toxicity to vultures. The drug was found to be toxic, this information is vital for prevention of further poisonings and, for lobbying governments against its use to reduce the effects of the Asian Vulture crisis.
December 2018	Calcium and Vitamin E study	VulPro	A nutritional study was conducted by a PhD student to determine if calcium and vitamin E within the blood of vultures differs when feeding on intensively farmed pigs compared to that game meat. This information will be vital in determining the nutritional health of vultures populations within in South Africa. We eagerly await these results.
December 2018	Nine transmitters attached to released captive bred and rehabilitated vultures	VulPro	This month we attached transmitters to released vultures so that we can: a) identify if the vultures are struggling and need assistance b) gain greater understanding of movement, foraging and roosting behaviour c) compare and understand the differences between movement patterns between captive and rehabilitated vultures d) a new research project will identify whether tagging of vultures reduces movement of released vultures

Education & Training

Date	Activity	Project title	Location	Comment
03/12/2018	Education and Training	Volunteers	VulPro	Volunteer Ashleigh Pienaar arrived to spend a week helping at the centre whilst learning about the importance of the work we undertake.
03/12/2018	Education and Training	Volunteer	VulPro	Volunteer Miquela Jemen volunteered to gain insight into vulture conservation.
03/12/2018	Education and Training	Volunteer	VulPro	Papiso from Lesotho joined the VulPro team for a week to learn more about rehabilitation and professional implementation. Papiso would like to develop a rehabilitation center in Lesotho.
20/12/2018	Education and Awareness	Education and Awareness	VulPro	Four adults and two children were taken on an educational tour of VulPro to learn about the importance of vultures and the work we undertake.
22/12/2018	Education and Awareness	Education and Awareness	VulPro	A couple toured the Centre and experience vulture treatments and close up viewing of our captive non-releasable birds.
22/12/2018	Education and awareness	Volunteers	VulPro	Longtime volunteer Bettina Boemans arrived to volunteer at the centre for 2 weeks. This is her third trip to VulPro this year alone.
28/12/2018	Education and awareness	Education and Awareness	VulPro	A family of 7 adults and 1 child toured the facility to learn about the importance of vultures and the work done at Vulpro.

Hide booking

22/12/2018 – Tyrone Glenn (2 people)

27/12/2018 – Wynand (2 people)

28/12/2018 – Mar Geldenhuys (6 people)

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.