

To motivate and create a sustainable forum at
Tamil Nadu, India, for supporting and
monitoring coordinated action among key
stakeholders, based on the [blueprint](#) of SAVE
([Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction](#)).

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PROJECT TITLE

To motivate and create a sustainable forum at Tamil Nadu, India, for supporting and monitoring coordinated action among key stakeholders, based on the [blueprint](#) of SAVE ([Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction](#)).

Summary

The aim of this project is to motivate the key players in Tamil Nadu, India to prepare a specific action plan in line with the SAVE blueprint for saving critically endangered *Gyps* vulture species. In order to fulfil that aim, a Tamil Nadu version of SAVE blue print was prepared for the first time and it was widely circulated to opinion builders and stakeholders for obtaining support for vulture conservation. Programmes such as Vet for Vulture, *Gyps* Carnivals, Vulture Trophy Volleyball Tournament and exhibitions at festivals were conducted. Pamphlets with identification features were printed and circulated among staff members of the Forest Department. Vulture conservation messages were delivered to the targeted audience.

Meetings were held with key stakeholders from the Animal Husbandry Department, Drug Control Department, Family Welfare Department, Forest Department, District Administration and the Veterinary University, documents with a message about the urgent need for eradicating the menace of diclofenac and ketoprofen were handed to them. Emphasis was placed on the three districts of Tamil Nadu where vultures still occur in small numbers.

There were positive responses to meetings with the State Secretary of Animal Husbandry Department and its Director, Ketoprofen was withdrawn in Tamil Nadu for the first time and a letter was issued to all veterinary doctors to stop the use of diclofenac, stating that if they continued to do so, they would face departmental action.

There were positive responses as a result of meetings with Forest Department officials also. A Vulture Conservation Plan has been included in the management plan of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

Introduction (include description of community involved/species/habitat and importance of area for birds)

Gyps species of vulture such as the Oriental White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* and Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus* and one non-*Gyps* species of vulture, the Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*, are at high risk globally. They are categorized as Critically Endangered because of rapid population declines within the last decade.

Our project area, Moyar Valley, is located in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve of the Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu. South India is home to 4 species of vulture (the Oriental White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Indian Long-billed vulture *Gyps indicus*, Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* and Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*).

Community involved.

Cattle herders belonging to various communities, including *Irulas Badugas* and *Kurumbas* were involved.

Project objectives

- Inclusion of a vulture conservation agenda (based on the SAVE blueprint) in the action plans of key stakeholders including the Government of Tamil Nadu
- The formation of a state-level steering committee that will better coordinate action among the stakeholders, monitor their commitments and influence field activities at the state level
- Reducing the use of diclofenac and other banned drugs initially in an area of 100 km radius around the core habitat area of Moyar Valley

- Increasing awareness about the vulture in the food chain and the importance of conservation among the public

Methods (describe the activities you carried out including how you carried out your evaluation of the project)

- A database about the opinion builders and key players was developed.
- Recommendations for the recovery of vulture species in Tamil Nadu were prepared for the first time in line with the 'Blueprint for the Recovery of South Asia's Critically Endangered *Gyps* Vultures' of SAVE.
- An action plan was widely circulated among the key stakeholders and decision makers in Tamil Nadu. Their opinions and feedback were gathered.
- The target audience, particularly veterinarians, was engaged through the 'Vet for Vulture' programme. Dr. Muralidharan, Scientist, Salim Ali Center for Ornithology and Dr. Percy Avari, Assistant Professor, Veterinary College, Mumbai addressed the gathering.
- Scientific reports on harmful drugs such as diclofenac and ketoprofen on vultures were compiled and circulated.
- Regular interaction at various levels through letter correspondence, personal visits, exhibitions, field visits and discussions was the key method used in the project.
- An informal forum at the state level was initiated for better coordination among the key players at the state level.
- Vulture conservation news reports were provided to the media.

Project evaluation results (include the number of people who were reached by your project and the number who took part in your evaluation)

- A total of 780 stakeholders were sensitized about the banned drugs, and messages were spread about the importance of vultures.

- There were 120 participants (veterinary doctors/professors/final-year students) at the Vet for Vulture programme held at Namakkal Veterinary College.
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- There were 480 participants at the capacity building programmes held for forest field staff (8 batches X 60 persons)
- We reached out to a total of 60 opinion builders, policy makers and key players.
- Ten members took part in the evaluation.

Sponsors

- Tamil Nadu Forest Department
- Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Mohamadbin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
- Ashirwatam Foundation
- Hill area Development Programme

Reference

Blueprint for the Recovery of South Asia's Critically Endangered *Gyps* Vultures prepared by SAVE, Feb, 2014.