

Helping the Vulture's long life live in Myanmar!



Fig – 1: Vulture Sun Bathing photo

Why protect Vulture?

In Myanmar, Vulture very often have a terrible reputation as an unlucky, ugly, dirty but they are not bad in the environment. Vultures are fed on carrions; the remains of dead animals can be full of harmful toxins. The disposing of infected carcasses produced by bacteria and spread by disease that can serious health issues not only in humans but also in livestock such as rabies, anthrax, brucellosis, tuberculosis and anthrax. The vultures have evolved an incredibly acidic digestive system to remove harmful substances or poisons from the diseased carcass and decompose most bones without becoming sick (Houston and Cooper, 1975). Therefore, vultures are fundamental to keeping our healthy ecosystem by cleaning up the carcass that is getting risk of harmful disease in our natural world.



Fig -2: Vulture is feeding on carcass photo

Vulture status in Myanmar

Three resident Vulture species are White – rumped Vulture, Slendar – billed Vulture and Red – headed Vulture, two migratory Vulture species are Himmalayan Griffon and Cinereous Vulture and Egyptian Vulture is vagrant in Myanmar. There are completely protected species in Myanmar and three resident vulture species are critically endangered species by the IUCN Red List.

Over 50 years of age, Vultures used to be quite common in many parts of Myanmar and had a significant population in Asia. Nowadays, the younger generations have seen Vultures only in zoos and in captivity than naturally throughout their life. Vulture was confirmed that it was widely distributed across approximately 126,705 sq miles, 34,379 sq miles in Kachin state, 13,907 sq miles in Chin state, 60,155 sq miles in Shan state and 18,264 sq miles in upper Sagaing region. Estimating the minimum population was 141 White–rumped Vultures, 49 Slender–billed Vultures and 3 Red–headed Vulture in Myanmar, according to the population and distribution survey in 2003 (Htin Hla et al., 2011). Recently survey, the resident Vulture species which is Critically Endangered, occurred at the Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding areas in Kachin state, in some part of the southern and northern Shan state, Chin state and Sagaing region with small population size in Myanmar.



Fig - 3: Vulture species photos

Under the threats

- ❖ **Food shortage:** Due to increasing mechanisms for agriculture, used to dress the carcass and tried to sell or eat the beef in locally and neighbor countries particularly in China. And, decreased the livestock production because of reducing the pasture areas.
- ❖ **Negative perceptions of Myanmar:** Common sense, many people have terrified of Vulture particularly on physical features that Vulture is a big body, strong beak and sharp legs, baldness head and neck like ugly bird, feeding function that Vulture is feed off the rotten carcass and give off a terrible stench to environs like dirty bird, and superstitions believed that the domestic ungulate animal have died of seriously diseases when Vulture is soaring flight in the air like unlucky bird. Due to unreasonable factors, many people have recognized the Vulture as a disguising species and no such the species in the world is better.
- ❖ **Lack or destruction of nesting habitat:** Vulture need not good forest, but be require the abundance food near nesting spot. People have cut the nesting trees and destroyed the nest on account of their negative perception. The nesting trees have limited by agriculture expansion in pasture areas, civilization and deforestation in Myanmar.
- ❖ **Poisoning:** Poisoning for Vulture species is mainly the veterinary drug namely the Diclofenac, which is a pain killer drug in NSAIDs: Non – steroidal anti – inflammatory

drugs group. The drugs have been used to treat symptoms of disease and injury in domesticated ungulates in many parts of the Indian subcontinent since the 1990s. Those drugs have poisoned the Vultures to damage the visceral gout and kidney within thirty – six hours when Vulture was feed on the carcass which have Diclofenac remains in dead body. Over 90% of Vulture population have been declined by Diclofenac and other NSAIDs such as Aceclofenac, Ketoprofen, Carprofen, Flunixin and Nimesulide. Diclofenac has widely used to domestic animals in Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding areas in Kachin state and southern Shan state where have the vulture stronghold areas in Myanmar.

- ❖ **Hunting:** There are many beliefs deal with most of the wild animals in traditional medical fields. Particularly they believe that Vulture bones are useful for curing bone fractures and some cancer in Myanmar.

Our conservation response

In 2019, BANCA initiated to form the working group, namely Myanmar Vulture Working Group which have comprised the Forest Department, Myanmar Veterinary Association, Flora and Fauna International, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wildlife Fund, Myanmar Bird And Biodiversity, Friend Of Wildlife and update the Vulture Conservation Action Plan (2019 – 2025). To be more strengthening the network and engagement with each member in Vulture conservation programs in Myanmar. We have cooperated with MVWG members to explore the research programs such as distribution, population, threats assessment and NSAIDs survey and collaborated with the communities to perform an education awareness programs and provide to our CBO members to be as a species champion for long term Vulture conservation programs at Vulture strongholds areas in Myanmar. Besides, we have approached to establish the Vulture Safe Zone and promote for Diclofenac banning process in Vulture areas.

How can you help

Donate: Thank ever so much for your donation to keep the healthy ecosystem in our environment by saving the Vulture species in Myanmar.

Support: Sharing information with your colleagues to have a good vibe about the Vulture and its regulating ecosystem services for our healthy life.

Involve: Collaboration with us as much as you can in our Vulture Conservation Program in Myanmar.

Remember that your contribution is one of signature to live long life the Vulture species in Myanmar!!

References

- <http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/white-rumped-vulture-gyps-bengalensis/text>
- <https://www.hawk-conservancy.org/IVAD/>
- <https://www.vultureday.org/>
- <https://4vultures.org/>
- <https://save-vultures.org/saving-asias-vultures-from-extinction-save-agm-2-copy/>
- <https://www.iucnredlist.org/search?query=White%20-%20rumped%20Vulture&searchType=species>
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- https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Myanmar%20Vulture%20Working%20Group&_ps=1
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