

RECENT LITERATURE

P.J. Mundy

AL BULUSHI, A., AL HARTHI, S., AL FARSI, G., AL ARAIMI, J. & AL HUMAIDI, J. (2013). Apparent increases in Egyptian vulture populations in the Sultanate of Oman. *Phoenix* 29: 15 - 17.

An estimated 65-80 pairs on Masirah Island, but with a productivity of only 0.46 fledglings per pair. At a new dump site in northern Oman, 238 vultures (incl. 188 adults) were counted on 9 October 2012.

(email: asma.albulushi@eso.org.om)

ALLAN, D. (2013). Cape Vulture. Apocalypse now? *African Birdlife* 1 (2): 58-59.

Red listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN, it faces a great array of threats – poisoning first, then electrocutions by and collisions with powerlines, wind farms, drowning, disturbance, and food shortage. “The day of reckoning may well be upon [it]”.

CHAUDHRY, M.J.I., OGADA, D.L., MALIK, R.N., VIRANI, M. Z. & GIOVANNI, M.D. (2012). First evidence that populations of the critically endangered Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus* in Pakistan have increased following the ban of the toxic veterinary drug diclofenac in south Asia. *Bird Conservation International* 22: 389-397.

A colony in SE Pakistan (Karunjhar Hills), neighbouring the Rann of Kutch of India, was monitored before (2003-2006) and after (2007-2012) the subcontinental ban on diclofenac in 2006. All parameters declined steeply to 2007, then increased markedly in 2008 and thereafter remained the same.

(email for M.Z. Virani: tpf@africaonline.co.ke)

CHOMBA, C. & M'SIMUKO, E. (2013). Nesting patterns of raptors; White backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*) and African Fish Eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*), in Lochinvar National Park on the kafue [sic] flats, Zambia. *Open Journal of Ecology* 3: 325-330.

Eight occupied nests of the vulture were found (and five for the eagle). Most were on *Faidherbia albida*, at an average height of 16.6 metres, and in woodland communities. Abandoned nests were within 100m of human disturbance. (This article is poorly edited, does not refer to previous literature, and the two photos are taken from Incarta, and the eagle is an American Bald Eagle!).

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DEMEY, R. (ed.) (2013). Recent reports. *Bulletin African Bird Club* 20 (1): 92 -108.

(p. 98) Rüppell's Griffons were photographed in the Mole National Park, Ghana, by David Hoddinott on 18 December 2012; the photo is included (all three birds are RGs). (p.100) An immature Cinereous Vulture was seen on passage with Eurasian Griffons over Meknes, Morocco, on 14 November 2012 by J. Franchimont. (p. 105) An immature Hooded Vulture (Empangeni) and three Lappet-faced Vultures (Winterton) were seen in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in August and July respectively, out of normal range.

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FINLAYSON, C., BROWN, K., *et al.* (2012). Birds of a feather: Neanderthal exploitation of raptors and corvids. *PloS ONE* 7(9): e45927.

The dark/black remiges of all four species of vulture in Europe (and also perhaps *Gyps melitensis*) feature in Palaeolithic sites of Neanderthal humans, along with other species of birds. It's clear that the pre-modern humans used the feathers as personal ornaments in symbolic behaviour.

(email: rblascolopez@gmail.com)

FISHER, I. (2013). Vultures are starting to soar again. *Birds* (RSPB magazine) 25(5): 2-3.

A brief note of optimism on the situation in the Indian subcontinent. With four photos of Oriental White backed Vulture. But wait ... "other veterinary drugs may have a similar effect ..."

(email: ian.fisher@rspb.org.uk)

GUTIÉRREZ, R., LORENZO, J.A., *et al.* (2012). Observaciones de aves raras en España, 2010. *Ardeola* 59: 372-373.

Up to and including 2010, there have been 45 sightings of 60 individuals of the Rüppell's Griffon in the Iberian peninsula, validated by the rarities committee.

(email: rarezas@seo.org)

MUNDY, P.J. (2013). Out of Africa? Some notes on Arabian vultures. *Phoenix* 29: 6-7.

The subspecies of the Bearded Vulture is considered to be the nominate *barbatus*, Rüppell's Griffon is considered to have occurred, a photo of the Lappet-faced Vulture is of the *negevensis* subspecies, and the Egyptian Vulture occurs as the nominate *percnopterus* subspecies

(email: mundy@gatorzw.com)

MURN, C. (2012). Field identification of individual White-headed Vultures *Trigonoceps occipitalis* using plumage patterns - an information theoretic approach. *Bird Study* 59: 515-521.

Thirty wild birds (ages not stated) were photographed from the side to highlight the upper median wing coverts. The pattern of these differed from left to right on the same bird, but each bird (adults?) had a unique pattern. The variations enable birds to be individually identified.

(email: campbell@hawkconservancy.org)

MURN, C., COMBRINK, L., RONALDSON, G. S., THOMPSON, C. & BOTHA, A. (2013). Population estimates of three vulture species in Kruger National Park, South Africa. *Ostrich* 84: 1-9.

A T-square plotless density estimator was the method used, calibrated by aerial survey counts. Across the whole park, White-backed Vultures were estimated at 904 pairs (95% C.I. ± 162), the Lappet-faced Vulture at 78 pairs (± 18), and the White-headed Vulture at 60 pairs (± 13).

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PHIPPS, W. L., WILLIS, S. G., WOLTER, K. & NAIDOO, V. (2013). Foraging ranges of immature African white-backed vultures (*Gyps africanus*) and their use of protected areas in southern Africa. *PLoS ONE* 8(1): e52813. 11pp.

Using GPS-GSM units on six birds, and tracking them for up to 313 days. Distances travelled averaged 22-49 km per day, but the maximum in one day was 267 km. Average and maximum flight speeds were 51 and 107 km/h respectively. Average foraging range covered was 269 000 km². Protected areas were infrequently visited. Two birds visited 'restaurants' regularly.

(email: s.g.willis@durham.ac.uk)

PORTER, R.F. & SULEIMAN, A.S. (2012). The Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* on Socotra, Yemen: population, ecology, conservation, and ethno-ornithology. *Sandgrouse* 34: 44-62.

A fascinating and well-documented introduction to the Egyptian Vulture of the island of Socotra (area: 3579 km²). An estimate of 1900 birds (incl. 800 pairs) was produced, which is of global significance. The vultures are not persecuted, trapped or poisoned by the locals, who "like them".

(email: rfporter@talktalk.net)

PRAKASH, V., BISHWAKARMA, M.C., *et al.* (2012). The population decline of *Gyps* vultures in India and Nepal has slowed since veterinary use of diclofenac was banned. *PLoS ONE* 7 (11): e49118. 10 pp.

Road strip counts since 1991 were used. By 2007, the Oriental White-backed Vulture had declined in India by 99.9%, and the Long-billed Griffon and Slender-billed Vulture (combined) by 96.8%. Use of diclofenac was banned in 2006; by means of much mathematics and statistics, the decline is seen to have slowed by 2011 and may even have reversed!

(email: reg29@hermes.cam.ac.uk)

SHOBRAK, M. (2012). The decline of the Griffon Vulture in Saudi Arabia. *Phoenix* 28: 7-8.

At seven sites in SW Saudi Arabia there were 45 nests in 1999. By 2010, only five nests were seen at one site. Probably several factors have caused this decline.

(email: mshobrak@gmail.com)

THERON, N. (2013). New IBA for Cape Vulture. *IBA Newsletter* [Birdlife South Africa] 3: 7.

Surveys in the north-eastern regions of the Eastern Cape revealed approx. 800 pairs of Cape Griffons. A new IBA for the species has been proposed here.

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