



VULTURE IS A NATURAL SCAVANGER: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

A vulture is a bird of prey that scavenges on carrion. There are twenty three species of vulture, they belongs to Accipitridae family. Most vultures inhabit open country, often roosting in groups on cliffs, in tall trees, or on the ground. Vulture, any of 22 species of large carrion-eating birds that live predominantly in the tropics and subtropics. Vulture divided into old world and new world vulture. Old world vulture include sixteen living species native to Europe, Africa and Asia. New world vultures are restricted to North and South America and consist of seven identified species, all belong to the Cathartidae family. Old World vultures build large stick platform nests in trees or on cliffs, sometimes in large colonies. A particular characteristic of many vulture is a bald head, devoid of feathers. This bare skin is thought to keep the head clear when feeding and also plays an important role in thermoregulation.

KEYWORDS: Vulture, New World Vulture, Old World Vulture

Vultures seldom attack a healthy living animal, but may kill the wounded or sick. Vast numbers have been seen upon battlefields. They gorge themselves when prey is abundant, till their crop forms a projection and sit, sleepy or half torpid, to digest their food. They do not carry food to their young in their claws, but disgorge it from the crop. Vultures are widely distributed, but they are absent from Australia and most oceanic islands. Most have broad food habits, consuming carrion, garbage, and even excrement, but rarely do they descent upon live animals A few occasionally take helpers prey such as lambs and calves. Vultures may remains aloft for horns . Soaring gracefully on long broad wings. When one bird discard to a dead or dying.

All of the New World vultures and some of the Old World vultures have bare heads, a condition that prevents feathers from matting with blood when the birds reach inside carcasses. Most vultures have a large pouch in the throat (crop) and can go for long periods without food—adaptations to a feast-or-famine scavenging lifestyle. In some species the beak is exceptionally strong and heavy for tearing hide, muscle, and even bone. Eyesight in all vultures is well developed, as is the sense of smell in the turkey vulture. Old World vultures have relatively strong feet, but New World Vultures have flat, weak feet that are poorly adapted for grasping. Vultures any of twenty two species of large carrion eating birds that live predominantly in the tropics and subtropics. The seven species of New World Vultures include condors, and the fifteen Old World species include the Lammergeier and Griffons. Although many members of

the two groups appear similar, they are only distantly related. All of the New World Vultures and some of the Old World Vultures have bare heads, a condition that prevent feathers from matting with blood when the birds reach inside carcasses. Most vultures have a large pouch in the throat (crop) and can go for long periods without food. Eyesight in all vultures is well developed as is the sense of smell in the turkey vulture.

OLD WORLD VULTURE

The Cinereous vulture sometimes called the black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) is one of the largest flying birds. Many Scientist consider this bird to be the largest vulture and the largest bird of prey .It is about 1 meter long and 12.5 kg in weight with a wing span of about 2.7 meter.

Old world vulture are not closely related to the specifically similar new world vulture and condors, and don't show that groups good sense of smell. The old world vultures are probably a polyphyletic group with in Accipitridae, with the palm-nut vulture. Egyptian vulture and bearded vulture are different from others. Most authorities refers to 2 major clades:- Gypaetinae and Gypinae.

NEW WORLD VULTURE

The new world vulture or condor family, Condors is a very large New World Vulture with a bare head and mainly black plumage. Living in mountainous country and spending much time soaring on massive outstretched.

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Cathartidae, contains 7 extant species in 5 genera includes 5 extant vulture and two extant condors found in warm and temperate areas of America. The new world vultures were widespread in both the old world and North America and during the Neogene.

Indian Vulture:- (*Gyps indians*) is an old world vulture native to India, Pakistan and Nepal. It has been listed as vertically endangered on the IUCN Red list since 2002 as the population severely declined. Indian vulture died of kidney failure caused by diclofenac poisoning. It breeds mainly on hilly crags in Central and Peninsular India. The Indian vulture breeds mainly on cliffs in south and central India, but is known to use trees to nest in Rajasthan. It may also breed on high human-made structure like the Chaturbhuj temple.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT VULTURES

1. Vultures have excellent senses of sight and smell to help them locate food and they can find a dead animal from a mile or more away. Because of this vultures often have large territories and spend a lot of time soaring to locate their meal. It is a myth that vultures circle dying animals waiting to feed.
2. Vultures usually have one mate a year. Nests are constructed using sticks, leaves and are built in trees and cliffs. The same nest may be used for several years.
3. Most species produce 1 chick and the male and female share parental responsibilities. They take turns with on shifting on the nest while its mate finds food, upon centuries is regurgitated for the hatching.
4. The Rueppell's griffon vulture is the world's highest flying bird.
5. Vulture can eat up to 20% of their own body weight in one shifting.
6. Vultures are equipped with a digesting system that contains special acids that will dissolve, botulism and cholera bacteria. New world vultures have unusual habit of urohydrolysis - defecating on their legs to cool them by evaporation. Vultures do not go after healthy prey, but will attack wounded and dying animals.
7. New world of vultures have the unusual habit of urohydrolysis- defecating on their legs to cool by evaporation.
8. A group of vultures is called a venue, and when circling the air, a group of vultures is called a kettle.
9. By consuming the causes of diseased animals, vultures prevent the spread of life. Threatening diseases such as rabies and anthrax among animals and humans.
10. Most vultures are social and sexual species can often be seen feeding together on the same carcasses.
11. One of the few animals to use tools, Egyptian vultures use rocks to break open ostrich eggs.
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Old World Vultures

Indian white rumped vulture- *Gyps bengalensis*

Long billed vulture- *Gyps indicus* Slender

Billed vulture- *Gyps tenuirostris*

Egyptian vulture- *Nepoleon percnopterus*

Leopard-faced vulture- *Torgos trachelios*

Red headed vulture- *Sarcogyps calvus*

New World Vultures

Turkey vulture- *Cathartes aura*

Lesser yellow-headed vulture- *Cathartes burrovianus*

King vulture- *Sarcorhamphus papa*

American black vulture- *Coragyps atratus*

CONTROL

In a major step, the Union Ministry of Health has banned multi-dose vials of human formulation of diclofenac, a painkilling drug that is responsible for the death of vultures in large numbers, reducing them to a critically endangered species in India and other Asian countries.

The ban has come into force with immediate effect.

The painkiller was banned from veterinary use in India in 2006 because of its lethal effect on vultures, which feed on carcasses of treated cattle and buffaloes. But since then human formulations of the drug have been illegally used to treat animals.

Authorities have planned to control the use of flunixin, another yet to be banned nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory veterinary drug (NSAID) in Nilgiris, Erode and Coimbatore after recent studies in other parts of the world point to the drug being responsible for the death of other vultures.

Animal husbandry department suggested usage of meloxicam as an alternative.

S. Bharathidasan, secretary of Arulagam, a non-government organisation working on protecting the least remaining population of vultures in the region, said the studies in Spain and Italy on specimens of dead vultures found that the carcasses of the critically endangered birds had traces of flunixin showing that flunixin might have the same effect on the vultures as did the banned NSAID-diclofenac, the use of which led to 90% of vultures in Asia being wiped out over the course of a few decades.

Diclofenac, like other NSAID, is usually used to treat cattle. When the cattle die, the vultures that feed on the carcasses die of renal failure from diclofenac poisoning. Forest Department official explained we welcome the restrictions on the use of flunixin in these regions, where the critically endangered white rumped

vulture, Asian King vulture, Egyptian vulture and long billed vulture are seen, said Mr. Bharathidasan, who urged the government to ban the drug throughout the state.

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