

Vulture conservation in Valmiki Tiger Reserve

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In news

Following the recent sighting of 150 vultures in Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR), officials have started planning for conservation of vultures.

Key points

- According to forest officials, **Egyptian vulture (Neophron percnopterus), Griffon vulture (Gyps fulvus), White-rumped vulture (Gyps bengalensis) and Himalayan griffon (Gyps himalayensis) were among the 150 individuals spotted** in VTR.
- About 75-80 vultures, **the highest number, were spotted at the Ganauli range**, followed by Madanpur and others.
- The proposed plan for vulture conservation had been sent to the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH).
- After approval from IDWH, a formal vulture conservation programme will begin in all five ranges of VTR.
- As per the plan, **a rescue centre for vultures will be set up in the Ganauli range**.
- Besides, the local community, living in nearby villages, will be made aware about the conservation of vultures. A campaign will be launched through street meetings, seminars at villages and other means.
- The state government has been planning to create a diclofenac-free zone for conservation of vultures in areas bordering Nepal. The current plan is a major step in this direction.
- Vultures from the Himalayan range visit areas in Bihar bordering Nepal during winters.

- However, vultures in Bihar are very difficult to spot today, unlike till early 2000. Like elsewhere, vultures used to play a vital role in the state by consuming animal carcasses before they decomposed or raised a stink.

Diclofenac behind declining population

- Diclofenac was introduced as an anti-inflammatory medicine for livestock, and vultures became its victims.
- Vultures died after consuming the flesh of animals that were administered diclofenac.
- It resulted in a drastic decline of the vulture population.

Conservation status of Vultures In India

- Critically endangered –White-Rumped Vulture, White-Backed Vulture, Ruppell's Vulture, Indian Vulture, Slender-Billed Vulture
- Endangered –Cape Vulture
- Near Threatened – Himalayan Vulture
- Least Concern – Griffon Vulture
- **India's conservation efforts are focussed on the three species of vultures** which are
- Critically Endangered – White-backed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, and Long-billed Vulture

Valmiki Tiger Reserve

- Valmiki Tiger Reserve forms the eastern most limit of the Himalayan Terai forests in India, and is the only tiger reserve of Bihar.
- Situated in the Gangetic Plains bio-geographic zone of the country, the forest has combination of bhabar and terai tracts.



- Valmiki Tiger Reserve lies in the north-westernmost West Champaran district of Bihar

Extra

Reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/vulture-action-plan-2020-25/>