

VULTURES



NEWSLETTER

January - March 2025





Table of Contents

- 2 A Message from the CEO - Kerri Wolter
- 3 Hartbeespoort Operations Update - Alistair Sinclair
- 4 Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Release Overview
- 7 Captive Breeding Programme
- 10 Research, Monitoring, and Tracking Initiatives
- 13 Threats to Vulture Populations and Mitigation Strategies
- 19 Staff and Contributions
- 21 Regional Update: Eastern Cape Activities and Progress
- 24 Education and Outreach Programmes
- 28 Media Coverage and Public Engagement
- 29 Academic Collaborations and Research Publications
- 30 Vulture Adoption Programme
- 32 Acknowledging Our Supporters, Partners, and Sponsors

“Each individual counts, as each individual saved and released back into the wild, contributes to saving wild vulture populations.”

– Kerri Wolter, CEO, Vulpro



Kerri Wolter

A message from the CEO

A Shift in Perspective: Seeing Our Planet – and Ourselves – with New Eyes

Ron Garan, a former NASA astronaut, spent 178 days in space, travelling in 2,842 orbits around Earth. During one of his trips, Garan experienced the so-called Overview Effect which is a phenomenon that transforms the way one sees our planet.

The Overview Effect – is a reality shock common amongst astronauts when observing the Earth from space. For Garan, the experience was life changing as he described it as his “great awakening”.

From Garan’s window on the International Space Station, apart from witnessing some of the world’s most remarkable natural phenomena, what stood out, for him, was the fine atmospheric thin line which “you could almost touch with your hands”. It was during that very moment that Garan “realised that everything that sustains life on Earth depends on a fragile layer, almost like paper,” he explained. The atmosphere, which is only a few kilometres thick, is what protects all life forms from the hostile conditions beyond Earth.

As we, as human beings, prioritise economic growth at the expense of the natural systems that sustain us. “We’re living a lie,” Garan stated. He also pointed out how problems like global warming, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity are treated as isolated issues, rather than symptoms of

a much larger problem: human disconnection with the planet. “From space, it becomes clear that we do not see each other as part of a whole. As long as we do not change this mentality, we will continue to be in crisis,” he said.

The message was and is still very clear; we urgently need to rethink our place in the world. Our greed, our entitlement and our selfishness is creating this emotional disconnection to our fragile world and how interconnected we all are, to each other and to all forms of life from all forms of biodiversity. We are all parts of the whole and it is time we realise that what we do to ourselves and to each other and to biodiversity, will lead to the great collapse of life on Earth.

Vulpro is committed to working as a part of the whole in the fight to protect, preserve and conserve Africa’s vultures. We take full responsibility for our part in preserving a part of the greater sum of biodiversity. Help us rewrite the story, starting from this very moment. Commit to making those lasting changes and let’s unite to preserve biodiversity, protect our vultures and to grow together as one community, as humanity and as one whole.

Kerri Wolter

CEO and Founder

“Join us in rewriting the story. *Together*, we are safeguarding the future.”

Hartbeespoort Operations Update

Last year was a whirlwind of change for Vulpro Hartbeespoort, but we weathered the storm and emerged stronger, ready to tackle any challenges that come our way. As we move through 2025, we continue our mission with renewed energy and determination.

January kept us busy with ongoing treatments for injured vultures admitted in December. Surprisingly, the anticipated influx of rescues in January and February did not materialise, making this period quieter than expected. However, February saw a notable increase in powerline collisions, particularly leading to wing fractures; reinforcing the urgent need for mitigation efforts.

With some breathing room, we seized the opportunity to tackle long-overdue projects.

Notable improvements included:

Gardens & Irrigation: The irrigation system was assessed, and a mini system was installed for the vegetable patch. We also propagated plants and planted new seedlings, bringing fresh life to the gardens.

New Car Cleaning Bay: A designated cleaning area was constructed near the workshop, improving efficiency.

Lawn Maintenance: The much-needed but persistent rains have turned lawn mowing into a near-daily task, keeping the grounds in top condition.

Hide Path: A walkway screen was placed along the path to the hide to reduce stress on the Condors, especially as breeding season nears.

Education remains at the heart of our mission, and we're thrilled to have expanded our team and reach. We welcomed an intern who will be based in the Blouberg/Vivo area, home to the largest Cape Vulture population. Her role

is crucial in spreading awareness about vulture conservation in this vital region, where the slaughter of vultures for the cultural belief-based trade is still rife.

We were privileged to host Zimbabwean environmental specialist Palloma Pachiti-Mutemi of Sebakwe Conservation for a week. Her insights and expertise enriched our education team tremendously, providing valuable new perspectives and strategies. In this, we also hope to forge a lasting relationship between ourselves and Palloma, to increase vulture awareness in Zimbabwe.

An increasing number of scholars are choosing to complete their community service with us. It's inspiring to see young people taking an interest in wildlife conservation and especially showing an interest in vultures. Though their tasks may seem small, their contributions are invaluable, and we welcome them with open arms.

Disi Piri, who transferred from Shamwari, has seamlessly integrated into our team. His contributions, particularly in long-distance vulture rescues, have been a tremendous help.

Volunteers Needed: We are in urgent need of dedicated volunteers at Harties to assist with:

- Gardening and groundskeeping
- General maintenance
- Rescuing grounded vultures in remote areas
- Sourcing essential supplies (lawnmowers, shade cloth, wire, tools, etc.)

As we move forward, we remain committed to our conservation efforts and are excited about the impact we can make with the support of our team, volunteers, and community. Here's to a productive and impactful 2025!

Alistair Sinclair

General Manager



Alistair Sinclair



Rescue and Rehabilitation

As we welcomed 2025, our commitment to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of vultures remained unwavering. In the first quarter alone, we admitted 34 patients, including African White-backed Vultures, Cape Vultures, a Hooded Vulture, a Black-shouldered Kite, and even a Blue Crane. While vultures continue to be at the core of our mission, we remain dedicated to assisting other large birds of prey and endangered species in need of care.

Causes of Admissions

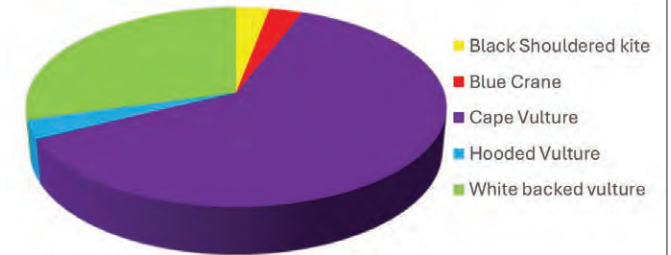
Throughout the quarter, vultures continued to face a range of serious and often life-threatening risks. Electrocutions and powerline collisions remained among the most critical causes of injury and mortality. Vehicle strikes, electric fence injuries, and barbed wire entanglements also contributed to the growing number of admissions.

In addition, several vultures were found grounded – unable to fly due to severe injuries or the impact of extreme weather conditions. These cases serve as a sobering reminder of the relentless challenges these endangered birds face in the wild.

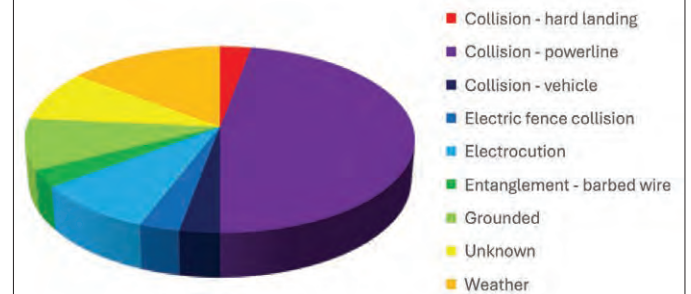
Releases

We are proud to report that 27 vultures were successfully released this quarter, including individuals rescued in both December 2024 and during the first three months of 2025. Each release represents a significant victory for vulture conservation – a powerful display of these birds' incredible endurance, and the steadfast dedication of our team to giving them a second chance in the wild.

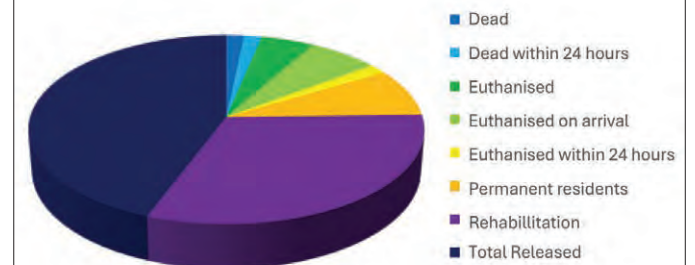
Species admitted January-March 2025



Cause of admissions: January-March 2025



Status of birds admitted January-March 2025





Rescue Highlight: Powerline Peril

The Rescue of Yellow Black A67

On 15 January 2025, Vulpro responded to an urgent call regarding a grounded Cape Vulture in Thabazimbi, believed to have collided with a nearby powerline. The fledgling, identified as Yellow Black A67, was unable to fly following the incident. While no fractures were detected, a possible dislocation in the right leg was noted. The bird is currently undergoing rehabilitation, with ongoing assessments to determine its recovery prospects. Should it regain full mobility, Yellow Black A67 will be released back into the wild. This case underscores the vital role that landowners and local stakeholders play in vulture conservation.

Prompt reporting of injured birds allows for rapid intervention, significantly increasing the chances of successful rehabilitation and release.

We are very grateful for the vigilance and cooperation of those working with us to protect these birds of prey.



Rehabilitation Highlight:

A Second Chance for Yellow Black 25

Wild and Free Wildlife Rehabilitation, working together with Vulpro, shows just how much can be achieved when organisations join forces for a common cause. This partnership recently made a real difference in the life of Yellow Black 25, a young Hooded Vulture rescued in Marloth Park after flying into an electric fence. Thankfully, the fledgling only suffered bruising and was otherwise in good condition.

On 18 January 2025, Yellow Black 25 was brought to Vulpro for ongoing rehabilitation. Since then, it's been steadily recovering while gaining important survival skills from Vulpro's resident Hooded Vultures. These skills are key to preparing it for a successful return to the wild.

The bird is doing exceptionally well, and plans are underway to release it in Mpumalanga. It will be fitted with a tracking device, allowing us to follow its journey and learn more about how young vultures adapt after release.

This case highlights the real value of working together. By combining efforts, Vulpro and Wild and Free are making sure every bird gets the care it needs – and a real chance to thrive back in its natural environment.



“Conservation
is not a luxury —
it is a legacy.
Every animal
we protect is
a promise kept
for tomorrow.”

Unknown



Release Highlight: Love is in the Air

On 14 February 2025, we celebrated an inspiring Valentine's Day by releasing 11 Cape Vultures – 10 rescued in 2024 and one from early 2025. Many of these individuals required prolonged treatment and rehabilitation, making their return to the skies all the more meaningful. The Nooitgedacht release site offered ideal conditions, allowing these birds the best possible start on their journey back into the wild. Their flight symbolised not only resilience but the tangible success of our conservation efforts.

As the first quarter of 2025 draws to a close, we reflect on a season shaped by both challenge and triumph. Every rescue, every rehabilitation, and every release tells a story of survival against the odds – and reaffirms our mission. These aren't just birds taking flight; they are chapters in a larger story of hope, resilience, and renewal.

At Vulpro, we're not just saving vultures – we're rewriting their story and, in doing so, protecting the ecosystems and communities that depend on them. With the support of our partners, landowners, and dedicated team, we continue to turn compassion into action – so that vultures not only survive but ultimately thrive once more.



Captive Breeding Programme Update

Preparing for the 2025 Captive Breeding Season

As we start preparing for our 2025 captive breeding season, we reflect on the past few years' work and our ability to achieve our mandate of producing as many vulture offspring as possible to counter the number of individual lives lost each year. This is no easy task, given that Vulpro, as one organisation alone, sees over 80 vultures lost annually.

Equipment Upgrades and Breeding Readiness

As we put the finishing touches to our preparations – with each incubator being immaculately serviced or refurbished and new state-of-the-art equipment purchased – we hope and pray that this year will see us closer to achieving our goals. Equipment failure and insufficient incubators have always been determining factors in the number of eggs we can safely artificially incubate. However, with the addition of new Grumbach incubators, we hope that some of our previous challenges have been overcome.

As we now await our additional expectant dummy eggs, kindly sponsored by the San Diego Zoo, we begin the daily task of providing ample nesting material to our captive birds. It is now up to them to begin their own preparations through nest building.

Learning from the Past: Data Analysis Underway

Over and above the 2025 preparations, the analysis of our historical captive breeding work is well underway through our partners, namely Dr Jennie Hewlett and Lisa Nupen, who have and continue to bring the data to life. Keep watching this space for more information as we begin to showcase some incredible analysis and interpretations of the data, which we believe will help guide captive breeding and establish clear protocols and management strategies.

Long-Term Commitment to Conservation

Our efforts do not end with breeding or rehabilitation. We remain committed to tracking the movement and survival of all previously released, captive-bred vultures. These long-term monitoring efforts provide crucial data on post-release adaptation, migratory behaviour, and the threats encountered – insights that inform every decision we make.

Looking Ahead

From upgraded infrastructure to behavioural support and data analysis, these collective efforts are laying the groundwork for a strong 2025 season. With each advancement, we edge closer to refining effective captive breeding practices that will contribute meaningfully to the long-term conservation of vultures across southern Africa.



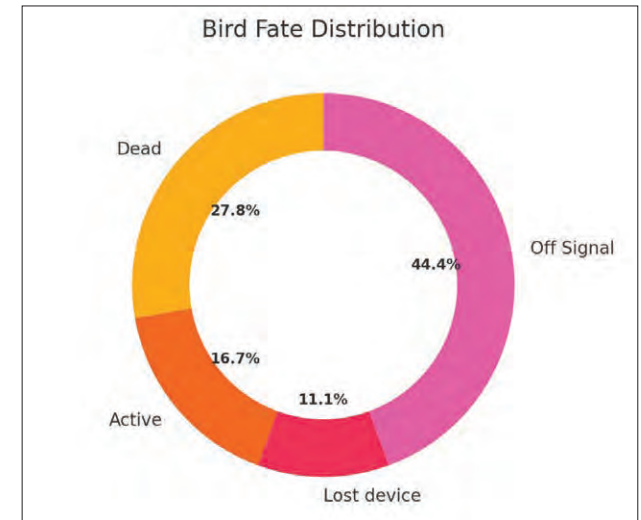


Captive Breeding Tracking Data

Regarding our captive-bred Cape Vultures released in Shamwari Private Game Reserve in May 2024, the situation has largely remained consistent since our last newsletter in December 2024.

One additional tracking device, Purple White 16, has regrettably gone offline, bringing the total number of inactive devices to 8 and reducing the number of active trackers to 3.

The 3 remaining active devices belong to Purple White 18, Purple White 47, and Purple White 78 respectively. Purple White 18 continues its eastward journey from our release site in the Eastern Cape, now flying over KwaZulu-Natal with frequent detours into the Free State. It is currently located near Bergville, likely in the company of other Cape vultures known to roost and breed across the Drakensberg mountain range. Meanwhile, Purple White 47 and 78 are located further south and have recently delivered a pleasant surprise.



Representation of the fate of each captive bred bird released in Shamwari Private Game Reserve in May 2024.



Tracking data obtained from currently active GPS devices fitted on Cape vultures released in 2024 at Shamwari Private Game Reserve, EC. Orange: Purple White 78; Green: Purple White 18; Light-blue: Purple White 47



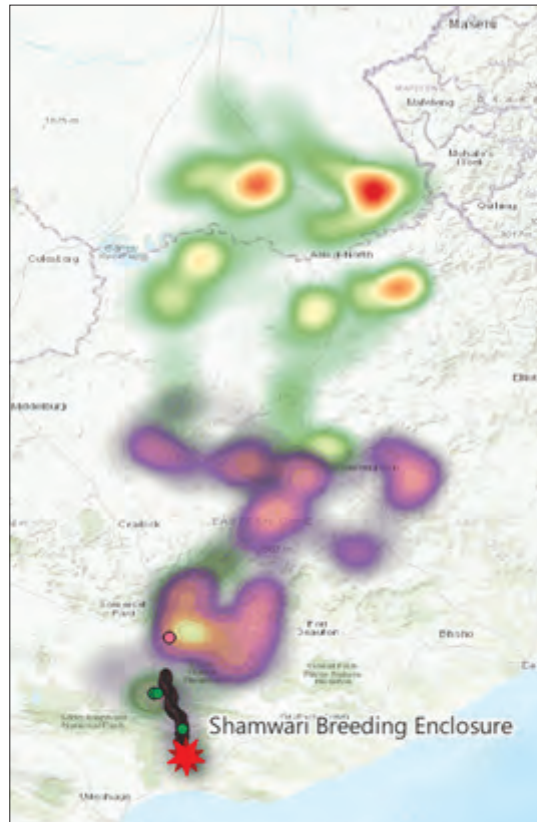
Back to Shamwari: Captive Bred Purple White 47 and Purple White 78

Purple White 47 and Purple White 78 are Cape vultures hatched in captivity at Vulpro's breeding centre in Hartbeespoort on 26 July and 19 August 2023, respectively. They form part of Vulpro's breeding programme, which uses non-releasable birds – due to injury or imprinting – to produce offspring for wild supplementation.

In early 2024, both birds were among over 160 vultures relocated to Vulpro's newly established breeding site in the Eastern Cape. Following a period of acclimatisation, they were released on 15 May 2024 at Shamwari Private Game Reserve, fitted with GPS tracking devices for post-release monitoring.

Purple White 78 moved steadily through Makhanda, Komani, and Mthatha, settling near the Lesotho border, while remaining largely within the Eastern Cape. In contrast, Purple White 47 travelled as far as Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal – some 800 km northeast – before looping through Lesotho and the Free State, eventually returning to the Eastern Cape.

In a promising development, both vultures have recently returned to Shamwari, seen perching near the original release enclosure. Their return is a significant step for vulture conservation in the Eastern Cape, where the species was once widespread. Although still years from breeding age, their site fidelity and movement patterns offer encouraging signs for long-term population recovery.



Return of Purple White 47 and Purple White 78 to the enclosures they were housed in at Shamwari Private Game Reserve, prior to their release in May 2024.



SHAMWARI
PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

BREEDING PROGRAMME PARTNER





Research, Monitoring and Tracking

Our Research Projects And Collaborations

As we carry out our daily activities, a significant part of Vulpro's work involves collecting extensive datasets across various conservation areas, including GPS tracking, captive breeding observations, and wild reproductive monitoring. This data is vital for addressing key research questions that inform both vulture conservation and broader wildlife management strategies.

We are currently engaged in several research projects in collaboration with students, zoos, and conservation professionals. One such project is a Population Viability Analysis (PVA) assessing the feasibility of vulture releases in the Eastern Cape. Originally developed for extinction modelling, this tool estimates the likelihood of a population's survival over time. It also identifies key threats and the points at which they become unsustainable, offering essential guidance for field-based conservation efforts.

Another project, in partnership with Knowsley Zoo, analyses GPS data from 20 wild Cape Vulture fledglings captured and tagged at Skeerpoort, North West, in 2019. The study aims to determine survival rates and establish baseline mortality and behavioural patterns for comparison with other Cape Vulture populations. With data analysis now complete, the project is in the writing phase and expected to be submitted for publication shortly.

We are also expanding our focus to assess the outcomes of our captive-bred, released vultures. As our breeding programme grows in size and species diversity, evaluating its success becomes increasingly important. With over 70 tracked captive-bred birds in our dataset, this project aims

to measure survival rates and compare behaviour with wild-hatched counterparts – crucial insights for refining release strategies and improving conservation outcomes.

We are currently seeking a researcher or student to lead this project. If you are interested in contributing to this important work, please contact us at research@vulpro.com or kerri@vulpro.com.

Submissions and Publications

Among our completed research collaborations, several papers have been submitted to scientific journals and have undergone peer review. Two of these are currently in the revision stage, with reviewer comments being addressed before acceptance for publication.

One paper analyses the threats posed by powerlines to Cape and White-backed vultures across South Africa, identifying high-risk crossing zones and recommending areas where proactive mitigation is most needed. Drawing on GPS data from 74 vultures, the study explores home ranges, landscape use, and estimated powerline interactions. The lead author is addressing reviewer feedback and will advise when the manuscript is ready for resubmission.

The second study examines how land cover and powerline density influence Cape vulture movements. Using GPS tracking data, the research highlights a clear preference for open habitats such as grasslands, and an avoidance of densely vegetated areas, human activity, and regions with high powerline density. The authors are finalising revisions, with the updated manuscript expected by April.

Monitoring - Tracking Data

Yellow Black A26

Yellow Black A26 is a young female Cape Vulture rescued from Vivo, Limpopo, on 15 December 2023, after being captured for the illegal wildlife trade linked to belief-based practices. On arrival, she was emaciated, dehydrated, and had severely swollen legs. She was treated at our Hartbeespoort facilities and, after a full recovery, released at Blouberg Nature Reserve on 13 March 2024.

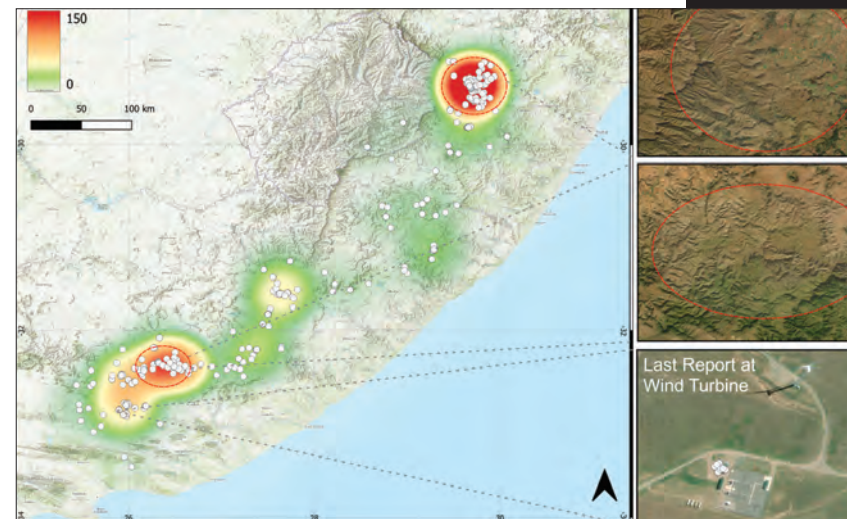
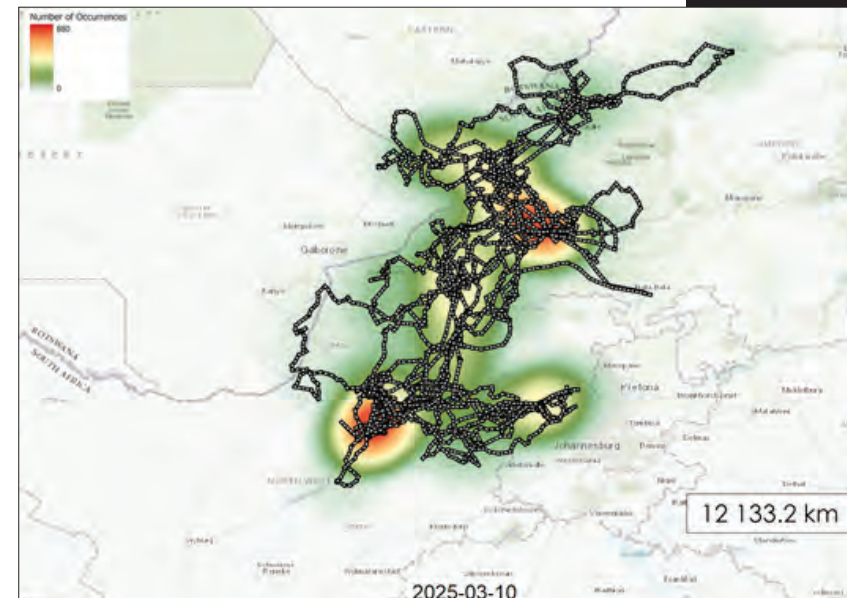
Since then, she has travelled over 12,000 km in just five months, focusing on northern South Africa. Her journey began in North-West, spanning Limpopo, the Northern Cape, and Gauteng, with multiple detours into Botswana. In South Africa, the muthi trade – the use of animal parts in traditional medicine for spiritual or belief-based purposes – remains a major threat to vultures. These birds are targeted for their perceived powers to enhance foresight, intelligence, and luck. It's estimated that up to 160 vultures are sold annually in eastern South Africa, with around 59,000 instances of vulture parts consumed each year

Purple White 34

Purple White 34, a rehabilitated Cape Vulture, was rescued on 17 January 2024 in Elliot, Eastern Cape. Emaciated and dehydrated, the bird was admitted to our sister facility at Rookwood Farm near Komani for treatment before being released close to its rescue site. Fitted with a GSatSolar GPS tracker, its movements post-release were monitored to provide valuable behavioural data.

For much of 2024, the vulture thrived, with tracking showing movements through KwaZulu-Natal, including a sighting near Pietermaritzburg in September. It later travelled southwest past Mthatha and towards KwaNojoli. Tragically, on 15 January 2025, Purple White 34 collided with a wind turbine near Bedford, Eastern Cape, and died instantly. The carcass and tracking device were recovered and taken to Shamwari Private Game Reserve, where a necropsy on 17 January confirmed severe internal injuries, including thoracic and abdominal trauma and cranial haemorrhaging.

Sadly, such cases are becoming more common as wind energy infrastructure expands. Vultures, which rely on thermals and air currents, are especially vulnerable to collisions with turbines often situated in key wind corridors. Research published in 2024, in collaboration with Vulpro, revealed that 49% of all human-induced mortalities in large birds are now linked to energy infrastructure – including wind farms, powerline collisions, and electrocutions – a figure expected to rise. While renewable energy is essential, mitigation strategies are vital to prevent further loss of vulnerable bird species.



Above map displaying Purple White 34's flightpath since September 2024, regrettably brought short by an abrupt collision with wind energy turbine near Bedford, EC, in January 2025.



The Power Of Tracking Data for Vulture Conservation

Tracking devices are integral to every aspect of Vulpro's work, aligning with our four core pillars: rescue and rehabilitation, captive breeding, research and monitoring, and education and outreach. By fitting GPS trackers to rehabilitated and captive-bred vultures prior to release, we can monitor their adaptation, survival, and contribution to wild populations – data that directly informs and refines our conservation strategies.

Beyond individual monitoring, tracking plays a vital role in identifying and addressing large-scale threats. In South Africa's vast landscapes, where vultures travel extensive distances, many dangers would go undetected without this data. GPS technology has helped us identify high-risk zones for powerline collisions and electrocutions, enabling collaboration with Eskom on mitigation efforts. Real-time data has also been critical in detecting poisoning events, where swift action can prevent mass fatalities.

Tracking insights extend to ecological research. One ongoing PhD study is investigating how climate variables like temperature and rainfall affect nesting success in African White-backed Vultures, combining GPS data with long-term surveys. Another study using GPS data from 20 Cape Vulture fledglings tagged in 2019 is establishing survival rates and behavioural benchmarks to evaluate our captive breeding and release programmes.

Beyond science, tracking data enhances public awareness. By sharing vulture movements – especially in and around human settlements – through interactive social media, we foster curiosity, connection, and a deeper appreciation for these far-ranging birds and the dangers they face.

Ultimately, tracking informs daily operations, shapes critical decisions, and strengthens community engagement. As technology advances – with lighter devices, improved solar batteries, and longer lifespans – keeping pace is essential. However, cutting-edge tools come at a cost. Sponsoring a tracking device is a direct and meaningful way to support vulture conservation.

To contribute, please contact us at kerri@vulpro.com or research@vulpro.com

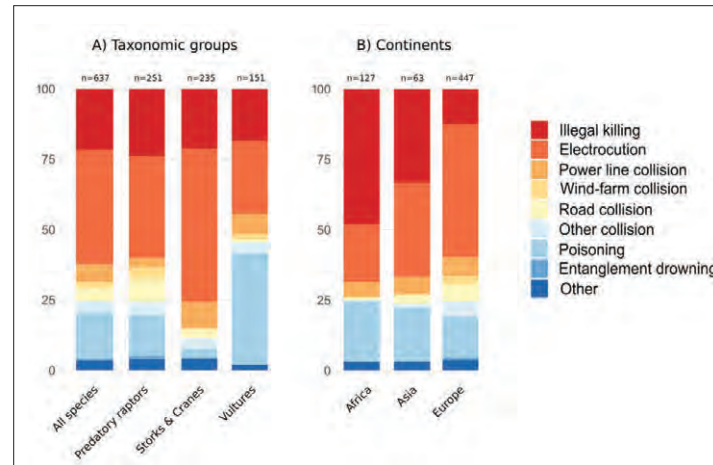
Threats To Vulture Populations and Mitigation Strategies

Wind Farm Collisions

Vultures face a range of threats to their survival, the majority of which are human-induced. A 2024 study compiled 1,704 mortality records from tracking studies conducted across the African-Eurasian flyway, covering 45 species – including vultures and other raptors – between 2003 and 2021. The findings revealed that human-induced mortalities significantly outweighed those from natural causes. Of these, energy infrastructure-related deaths (including electrocution, powerline collisions, and wind turbine strikes) accounted for 49%, followed by illegal killings (21.7%) and poisoning (16.3%).

To help address South Africa's ongoing energy shortages, Wind Energy Facilities (WEFs) are expanding rapidly. These wind farms are strategically placed in areas with strong air currents to maximise energy output. Unfortunately, these same currents are crucial for raptors such as vultures, which rely on thermals and updrafts to soar and conserve energy. This overlap increases the risk of collisions with turbines.

Vultures are particularly vulnerable to turbine strikes due to their physical and behavioural traits. Their large size, broad wingspans, and heavy weight limit manoeuvrability, making it difficult to avoid obstacles. Despite their excellent eyesight, their limited frontal binocular vision impairs depth perception, reducing their ability to judge distances accurately. These traits, once ideal for open skies, now leave vultures ill-equipped to navigate the hazards posed by wind farms. The risk is further heightened when vultures congregate in large numbers at feeding sites.



Percentages of human-induced causes of mortality by: A) taxonomic groups and B) continents, calculated from all known human-induced causes of mortality (n = 637).

To assess the extent of the issue, BirdLife South Africa conducted a study, published in February 2025, examining the effectiveness of operational-phase monitoring and mitigation of wind energy's impact on birds in South Africa. Under the Environmental Impact Assessment process, all WEFs are legally required to conduct such monitoring and report their findings, though compliance is not always assured.

Analysing data from 33 WEFs between 2015 and 2023, the study documented 2,444 bird fatalities – averaging 4.25 casualties per turbine per year. These included 202 species, 21 of which (>10%) are classified as Species of Conservation Concern (SCC). Notably, 45 Cape vultures and 7 White-backed vultures were among the recorded fatalities.



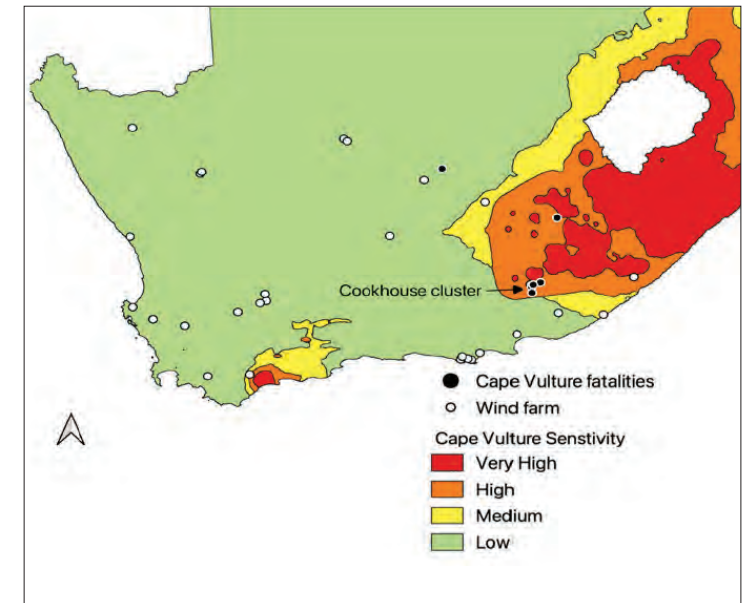


Conversely, the relatively low number of White-backed vulture fatalities is likely due to limited overlap between WEFs and the species' distribution. In this study, only two facilities were located within 20 km of recorded White-backed vulture sightings from the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2). However, carcass recoveries at these sites revealed a fatality rate of 0.074 vultures per turbine per year — suggesting a risk of significantly higher mortality if more WEFs are developed within the species' range.

The report also outlines various mitigation measures currently in place across South African wind farms, offering practical recommendations to reduce vulture collisions. These include Livestock Carcass Management — also referred to as Vulture Food Management (VFM) — which involves the removal of carcasses to prevent vultures from being attracted to high-risk areas, blade patterning to improve turbine visibility, and the establishment of supplementary feeding sites to divert vultures away from wind farms.

One of the more promising approaches is Observer-Led Shutdown on Demand (OLSDOD), where trained personnel monitor for approaching birds and temporarily halt turbine operations when Species of Conservation Concern are at risk. While effective, this method has limitations, as it relies on the vigilance and timely response of on-site observers. To address this, technology-driven solutions have been developed to enhance reliability.

Among these innovations is IdentiFlight, a US-developed system employing image recognition technology to detect approaching birds and automatically shut down specific turbines when a potential collision with an endangered species is identified. By reducing reliance on human observation, such tools offer a more consistent and dependable means of mitigating the impact of wind energy on vultures and other avian species.



The overlap of WEFs with Cape Vulture habitat utilisation/ sensitivity in South Africa. Sensitivity is defined according to a simplified distribution model developed by Cervantes et al. (2023) and included in the National Screening Tool (<https://screening.environment.gov.za>). Black dots indicate WEFs where Cape Vulture fatalities were recorded. White dots are WEFs where no Cape Vulture fatalities have been recorded. Note that there are five WEFs in the Cookhouse cluster, where most fatalities have occurred.

To combat bird, and for our purposes, vulture fatalities from wind farm collisions, IdentiFlight, an AI-driven bird detection and turbine shutdown system could be a possible solution to mitigating these risks. IdentiFlight uses advanced optical sensors to monitor a 1.3 km radius, identify vultures in real-time, leading to shutdowns on demand to prevent collisions. The system has been effective globally, significantly reducing bird fatalities, and has shown over 85% reduction in eagle deaths. As South Africa's renewable energy sector grows, Vulpro is hoping that new and existing wind farms will adopt this approach.

Mitigation Efforts

Conservation organisations and energy developers have often been viewed as being at odds due to conflicting interests. As a conservation organisation, we support the transition to renewable energy and the move away from fossil fuels. However, while we do not oppose the industry as a whole, it is important to acknowledge that this shift introduces significant challenges for avian species. Rather than adopting an adversarial stance, Vulpro advocates for collaborative solutions to mitigate the impact of energy developments on vultures and other wildlife.

In this spirit, we recently facilitated a productive meeting with Golden Valley Wind Energy Facility (WEF), operated by Engie near Bedford in the Eastern Cape. Representatives from the facility attended with enthusiasm, and we had the opportunity to showcase our vulture facilities while discussing potential areas for collaboration.

Golden Valley WEF has made notable efforts to reduce bird fatalities by removing carcasses that could attract vultures, and implementing on-demand shutdowns when species of conservation concern are detected near their turbines. Although these mitigation measures are not foolproof – as evidenced by the

unfortunate loss of Cape vulture Purple White 34 in January – Golden Valley's team reports that their protocol has significantly reduced overall mortality. Since its implementation in 2021, incidents involving priority species have decreased from 9 to just 2 between 2022 and 2025. These proactive measures are invaluable, and while on-demand shutdowns are not legally required for operational WEFs, we strongly encourage all wind farms to adopt this practice to help curb avian fatalities.

Another key outcome of the meeting was the strengthening of connections with neighbouring WEFs, which is particularly important given the high-risk nature of the Cookhouse WEF cluster for Cape vultures. The discussions provided valuable insights into engaging with surrounding landowners and energy developers, paving the way for future collaborations.

If you are involved in the Wind Energy industry and would like to explore opportunities for cooperation, please contact us at kerri@vulpro.com or research@vulpro.com.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Golden Valley WEF and their team for visiting us and for their continued dedication.





EIAs

Vulpro plays a critical role in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, which all developments must undergo before planning permission is granted. With South Africa's renewable energy industry expanding, more applications for Environmental Authorisation are being submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE).

The EIA process evaluates the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of proposed developments, ensuring projects are sustainable and comply with environmental regulations. It includes data collection, specialist consultation, and public participation to assess risks such as habitat destruction and species displacement. If risks are deemed manageable, mitigation measures like habitat restoration or design modifications are recommended. If risks are too high, projects may be rejected.

Public participation is crucial, with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) allowed to submit comments. Vulpro reviews these applications, offering expert input on vulture conservation and advocating for mitigation measures or project relocation if necessary. We recommend bird-friendly technologies like turbine shutdown protocols, powerline flappers, and electrical insulators to reduce impacts on vultures.

Since the beginning of the year, 29 developments have undergone the EIA process, including proposals for solar, wind, and resort projects across South Africa. Two developments of concern are the Berlin WEF and the Verkykskop WEF Cluster, which includes Groothoek, Normandien, and Kromhof WEFs.

Berlin WEF, in the Eastern Cape, released its Draft Scoping Report on 14 January 2025, with a 30-day period for comments. The project includes 25 wind turbines, each up to 120 metres tall. Our concerns stem from the significant risk to Cape vultures using this area, as we have tracked consistent vulture activity and identified breeding colonies and roosts within a 50 km radius.

The Verkykskop Cluster, located in Verkykskop, Free State, proposes 170 turbines across 19,506 hectares. The Draft Scoping Report was submitted on 22 January 2025. Given the area's ecological significance, the risks are high. The report suggests a vulture food management programme, relocating food to feeding sites away from turbines. However, due to the site's layout and its location within a crucial vulture corridor, we believe that repositioning turbines away from high-risk areas is the only effective solution to significantly reduce mortality.

Illegal trade

Illegal harvesting for traditional belief-based practices, constituting 21.7% of all human-induced avian mortality, is a major conservation concern for already threatened vulture species across Africa. Known as the muthi trade, vultures are sought after for their perceived spiritual properties, with body parts believed to bring good luck, cure illnesses, and the ability to predict the future. A study in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality near Kruger revealed vultures being hunted and trafficked through a network of hunters, traditional healers, and muthi traders.

Common harvesting methods include poisoning, trapping, and shooting. Poisoned carcasses are placed in the veld, killing vultures and other scavengers that feed on them. The illegal captivity of vultures has also been documented, with distressing cases such as the rescue of two malnourished vultures in Mafikeng, NW, in October 2024. These birds were found severely injured and were transferred to Vulpro's rehab centre for urgent care.

The implications of illegal harvesting are dire, particularly for adult vultures, as many may have dependent chicks. Vultures' slow reproductive rates mean the loss of adults can prevent species recovery. Six of South Africa's seven resident vulture species are listed under the Threatened or Protected Species (ToPS) legislation, making it illegal to capture, kill, or trade them except for conservation or scientific purposes. However, enforcement remains weak, and illegal trade persists. In KwaZulu-Natal, it's estimated that 160 vultures are sold annually in eastern South Africa, with a total market value of R1.2 million (US\$120,000). This trade is widespread across Africa.

Cultural beliefs, extreme poverty, and low conviction rates contribute to the persistence of this illegal practice. Poachers, often embedded within local communities, are difficult to apprehend, complicating efforts to halt the trade. Proactive efforts, such as education campaigns and engagement with traditional healers, aim to reduce demand and promote alternative practices, but socio-economic factors limit their effectiveness, as many rely on vulture poaching for income.



References

BirdLife South Africa 2025. Summary Bird Monitoring Reports from Operational Wind Energy Facilities in South Africa. BirdLife South Africa Occasional Report Series No. 3. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa
<https://www.birdlife.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Summary-of-Bird-Monitoring-Reports-Final-Version.pdf>

Government Gazette of South Africa (2023) The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA): List of Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) National Gazette 700 (49470): 2-60.
https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/legislation/202310/nemba_tops.listpublication_freshwater_g49470gon3_963.pdf

Manqele, Nomthandazo & Selier, Jeanetta & Downs, Colleen. (2024). Aspects of the illegal hunting and trade of vultures in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Ostrich. 95. 1-13.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385933576_Aspects_of_the_illegal_hunting_and_trade_of_vultures_in_northern_KwaZulu-Natal_South_Africa

Martin, G. R., Portugal, S. J., & Murn, C. P. (2012). Visual fields, foraging and collision vulnerability in Gyps vultures. Ibis, 154(3), 626-631.
<https://www.hawk-conservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Martin-et-al-Vulture-visual-fields-and-collision-vulnerability-Ibis-2012.pdf>

Mashele, N. M., Thompson, L. J., & Downs, C. T. (2021). Traditional health practitioners' and other community members' perceptions of vultures in the Kruger to Canyons biosphere region, South Africa. Journal of Raptor Research, 55(3), 340-358.
<https://meridian.allenpress.com/rapt/article-abstract/55/3/340/468969/Traditional-Health-Practitioners-and-Other?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

McKean, S., Mander, M., Diederichs, N., Ntuli, L., Mavundla, K., Williams, Wakelin, J. (2013). The impact of traditional use on vultures in South Africa. Vulture News, 65, 15-36.
<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/vulnew/article/view/168914>

Serratos, J., Oppel, S., Rotics, S., Santangeli, A., Butchart, S. H., Cano-Alonso, L. S., ... & Nygård, T. (2024). Tracking data highlight the importance of human-induced mortality for large migratory birds at a flyway scale. Biological Conservation, 293, 110525
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320724000867>

Powerlines

A Deadly Threat to Vultures and Wildlife

Powerlines pose a serious danger to vultures and other large birds, as well as livestock and wildlife. Collisions and electrocutions can lead to severe injuries or fatalities, threatening the survival of these vital species and disrupting ecosystems.

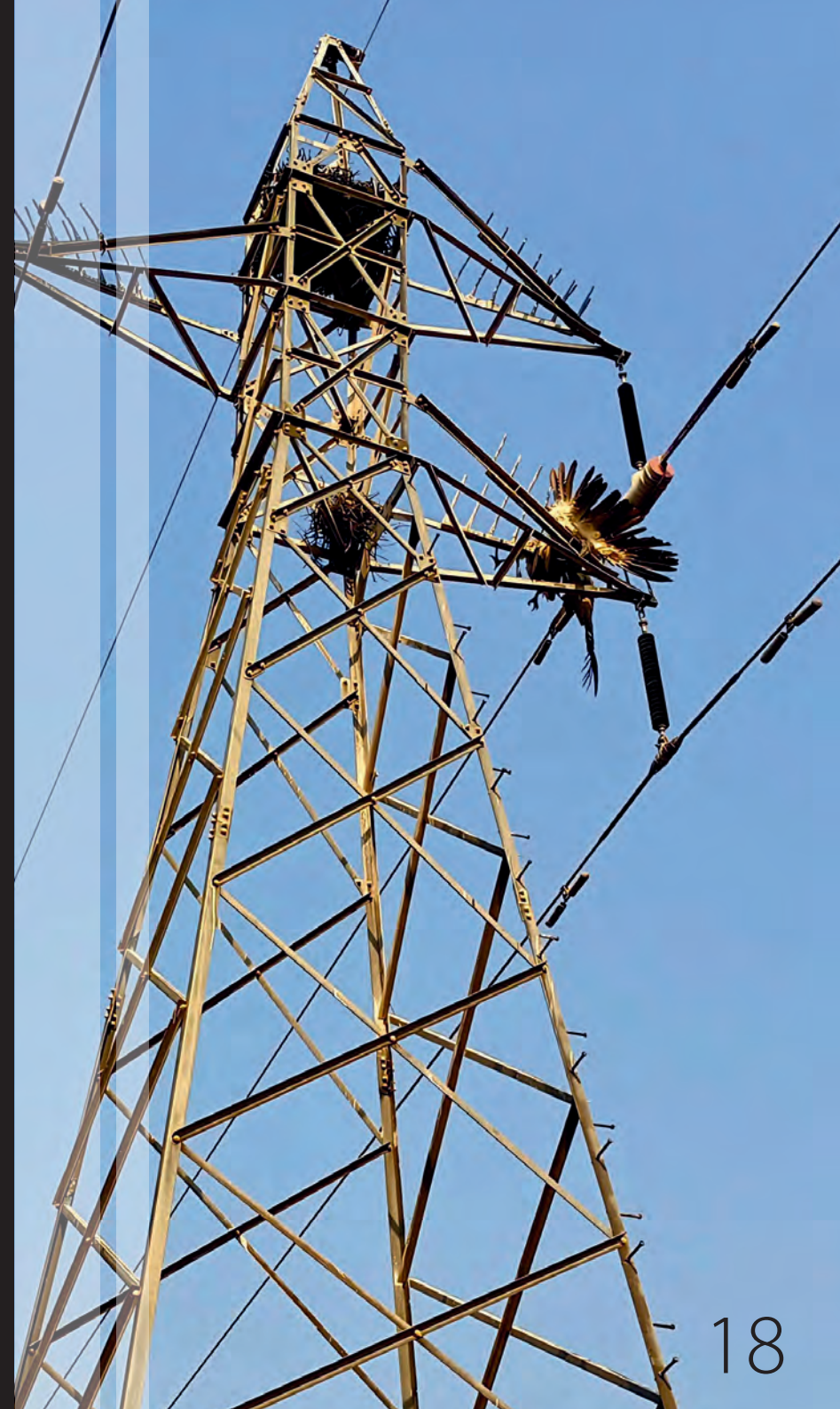
We need your help!

If you encounter any injured or dead birds of prey or wildlife affected by powerlines, please report it to VulPro.

082 808 5113 | kerri@vulpro.com

Together, we can protect our wildlife and preserve vulture populations. By doing so, you can help activate the Eskom Incident Management Process and prevent further harm.

www.vulpro.com





Staff Highlights

Devilliers B. Disi Deputy General - Operational Assistant

"My name is Divelliers B. Disi, though I prefer to be called Disi, after my father. I was born into an animal-loving family, and from a young age, I developed a deep appreciation for the care and responsibility involved in looking after animals. Growing up, I raised my own pigeons and rabbits, taking on the responsibility of sourcing their food – such as special grasses and feeds – with the support of my father, who also helped me build their cages. I nurtured abandoned baby doves back to health, and they eventually joined my flock of pigeons.

"In 2024, my nephew, Obert Phiri, informed me of a vacancy with Vulpro at the Shamwari facility in Port Elizabeth. I began my training shortly thereafter, and I am sincerely grateful to Kerri Wolter for entrusting me with this role.

"This opportunity has significantly expanded my understanding of the ecological importance of vultures and the many challenges they face as endangered species. I am committed to supporting Vulpro's vision: to protect these magnificent birds and to raise awareness within our communities about the vital role vultures play in our environment.

"I am proud to be part of the Vulpro team and would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Kerri Wolter for providing me with this opportunity."

Philipine Makhubela Education and Community Outreach Intern

"My name is Phillipine Makhubela, and I am a graduate in Nature Conservation. I chose to pursue a career as a conservationist due to my profound connection with nature and my sense of responsibility towards its preservation. Having grown up amidst the splendour of mountains, rivers, and wildlife, I witnessed firsthand the detrimental effects human activities can have on these ecosystems.

"As I deepened my understanding of environmental challenges, such as habitat destruction and species extinction, particularly that of vultures, I became increasingly aware of the potential to make a meaningful impact. It is my mission to raise awareness, educate the public, and actively contribute to the safeguarding of our natural world for future generations."





Emergency Assistance

for Injured Vultures and Large Birds of Prey

Vulpro's Permits and Registration:

- Fully authorised and registered as a vulture specialist conservation organisation and rehabilitation facility.
- Permits cover multiple provinces within South Africa and provide advice and consultation across Africa and beyond.
- Specialises in the rescue, treatment, and release of vultures and other large birds of prey.
- Only facility specialising in both in-situ and ex-situ vulture conservation strategies.
- Achieves a 75% survival rate post-release.
- Releases 64% of all cases coming into the facility.
- Incorporates individuals unable to be released into a captive breeding programme.
- Offspring from the breeding programme are released, preventing species extinction by replenishing wild populations.



Gerhard Verdoorn: +27 82 446 8946

Kate Webster: +27 82 702 5942

Kerri Wolter: +27 82 808 5113

Assessing the Situation:

1

- Check the bird's status (dead or alive).
- Count and observe: Note behaviour and location details.
- Take pictures and videos for documentation.

Recognising Symptoms:

2

- Note symptoms like wing drooping, fluffed feathers, or difficulty flying.
- Pay attention to any signs of distress.

Prompt Action:

3

- Contact Vulpro immediately for assistance.
- Provide precise location details and GPS coordinates.
- Stay with the bird until help arrives.

Handling and Transportation:

4

- Approach the bird calmly and minimise noise.
- Consider weather conditions and provide suitable shelter.
- Consult Vulpro for guidance on safe handling and transportation.

Emergency Response:

5

- Act swiftly to save bird's lives.
- Your quick response could be the lifeline for vultures in need!

Regional Update:

Eastern Cape Activities and Progress

The first quarter of 2025 was filled with powerline incidents, sightings, and media attention.

Powerlines and Rehabilitation

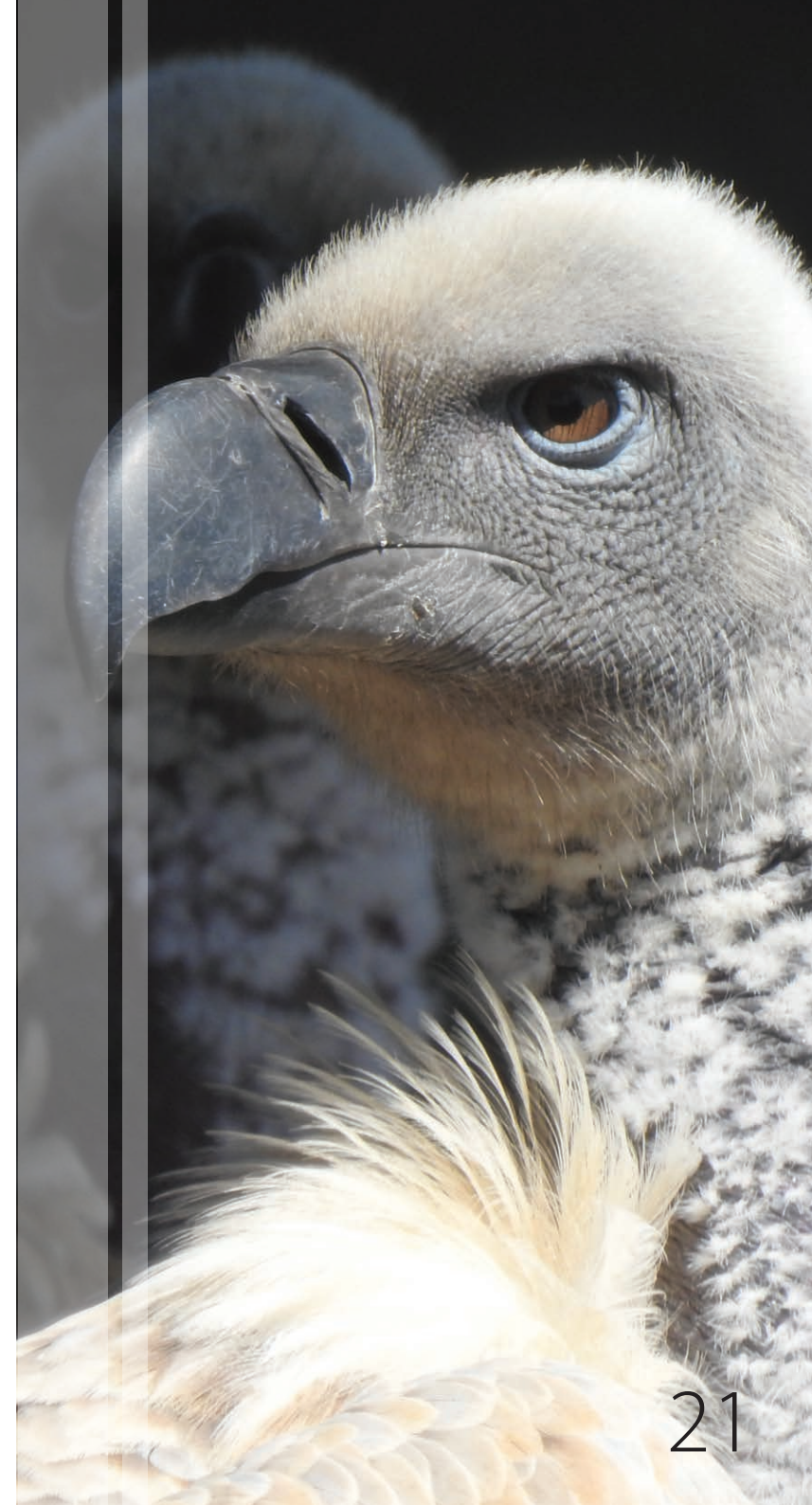
Below is a summary of all the birds that have either been reported to me (excluding those found by Vulpro staff), or that I have personally collected, following negative interactions with electrical infrastructure in the Eastern Cape.

Date	No. of Birds	Collision/Electrocution	Location	Notes
08/01	3 Cape Vultures	Electrocution	Knapdaar, Burgersdorp	All deceased
15/01	1 Cape Vulture	Collision	Lady Grey	Hairline fracture in wing
22/01	1 Cape Vulture	Collision	Winterberg, Adelaide	Possibly releasable
22/01	1 Cape Vulture	Electrocution	Mortimer, Cradock	Deceased
02/02	1 Cape Vulture	Collision	Mortimer, Cradock	Broken wing
18/02	1 Cape Vulture	Collision	Knapdaar, Burgersdorp	Set the veld alight
14/03	2 Cape Vultures	Electrocution	Tarkastad	1 euthanised, 1 deceased
18/03	1 Cape Vulture	Collision	Thomas River	Set the veld alight
23/03	2 Cape Vultures	Electrocution	Molteno	—
25/03	1 Cape Vulture	Collision	Somerset East	Fracture in wing; too late to pin

* Cape Vulture = the majority of these birds were still below breeding age.

Summary of the above:

- 14 Cape Vultures affected
- 10 birds deceased (including 1 euthanised)
- 4 birds were alive (3 permanently grounded)
- 1 bird was releasable
- Survival rate: 28.5%
- Mortality rate: 71.5%





I would like to thank:

- **Vulpro at Shamwari Private Game Reserve** for their unwavering support;
- **My family, staff, vets, and friends** who always help when needed;
- **Vivian at Maidenhead Piggeries (No. 2 Pigs)**, who keeps the birds supplied with food;
- **The landowners**, my vulture heroes, for their watchful eyes and proactive reporting;
- And lastly, **Kerri**, for her consistent support, mentorship, understanding, and belief in my work. This trust is the foundation of my connection to vultures.

I will continue to fight for their survival – no matter how unpopular it may be. These birds have an essential role in our environment, and they deserve our protection.

Kate Webster
Eastern Cape Vulpro Associate

Once again, I ask myself – are things improving, or are we simply becoming better informed about where birds have gone down, and are either deceased or in need of assistance?

I also collected one extremely thin and dehydrated young Cape Vulture from an abattoir disposal site. Clearly, the bird had endured several long, hot days in the sun without real food. This poor vulture had such a strong will to survive, but unfortunately appeared to have picked up a severe infection that manifested in one of her feet. Despite the best efforts by the Vulpro team at Shamwari Private Game Reserve, she could not be saved.

Sightings

Despite the above, the number of sightings reported over the past three months has been truly uplifting.

Possibly the most heartening sighting came from a farmer near the Wapadsberg area, between Cradock (Nxuba) and the N9 heading towards Graaff-Reinet. He reported seeing 15 Cape Vultures on his property – for the first time in over 50 years! The excitement from this news spread quickly, and shortly afterwards another report came in from near the Mountain Zebra National Park, where 84 vultures were spotted, perched on transmission pylons. While some locals believe Cape Vultures have always been present in this area (which I do not dispute), the number of birds is what makes this so special.

Subsequent reports included:

- Two separate sightings near Jamestown of over 70 birds feeding on dead cattle.
- A group of over 50 vultures feeding on an electrocuted cow and calf near Bonkolo, outside Queenstown.
- Two massive flocks of over 200 birds – one in the mountainous Winterberg region (Scott Pringle), and the other high in the mountains above Elliot towards Barkly East on Theuns Botha's property.
- A sighting of two vultures feeding on a carcass in the Pearston area, far to the west.

Thank you to the landowners for your enthusiasm and support in reporting these sightings. Your observations not only mean that vultures are being seen, but also that you are taking ownership of their presence and conservation.

Media

With the positive news of vultures expanding further into Karoo regions, I was asked by Kerri to participate in a radio interview on *Cape Talk 702*. The host, Pippa Hudson, was fantastic, and the interview went well. You can listen to the podcast here: Cape Talk Podcast – Pippa Hudson

I was also interviewed by Anton Ferreira of the *Sunday Times* regarding wind farms and their impact on vultures. Anton wrote three excellent articles, both published in the Sunday Times and Business Live:

- Winds' Green Blades of Death
- Wind Farms Whacking Wildlife in South Africa
- [Who Guards the Green Guardians?]
(https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/life/2025-03-27-who-guards-the-green-guardians/#google_vignette)

General

This quarter has been filled with heartbreak – particularly upon learning that P/W34, a vulture I had rehabilitated and released, was killed by a wind turbine in the Cookhouse area. The second blow came more recently, when I collected an electrocuted bird in Tarkastad. As I turned her over to examine her injuries, I knew I had no choice but to sign her death warrant. She had no chance of survival.

Few will understand the gut-wrenching sorrow that comes with moments like these. You always think, **"It will get better"... but it never really does.**

A photograph of a vulture perched on a rock, looking to the right. The vulture has brown and tan feathers, a dark beak, and a small crest of feathers on its head. The background is a clear blue sky.

Rewrite the Future. *Leave a Legacy.*

Africa's vultures are facing a crisis — but your legacy can help shape a different future.

By including Vulpro in your will, you leave more than a gift. You create a lasting impact that supports rescue, rehabilitation, captive breeding, and vital conservation work.

Your bequest ensures that these critically endangered birds are not lost to history, but protected for generations to come.

Help us turn the page —
so vultures not only survive, but thrive.





“Wildlife doesn’t need us to conquer it, only to coexist with it.”

Unknown

Education

In the first quarter of 2025, Vulpro made notable progress in its education and outreach efforts across Hartbeespoort and the Eastern Cape. The team actively expanded its reach, through engaging educational initiatives that foster awareness and a deeper understanding of vultures, their ecological importance, and the efforts needed to protect them.

On-Site Education and Outreach

On-site educational sessions were held at Vulpro Hartbeespoort and Vulpro at Shamwari Private Game Reserve, offering hands-on learning experiences for both learners and educators. Participants had the opportunity to see the birds up close and hear their individual stories, gaining insight into the threats vultures face, such as collisions with powerlines and poisoning, as well as their critical importance in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. They were also able to observe the different vulture species in the rehabilitation centre and learn about the challenges involved in running a facility dedicated to vulture care. The sessions highlighted not only the threats faced by these birds but also the dedicated effort required to ensure their conservation.

- Type: On-Site Education
- Total Participants: 78

Off-Site Education and Outreach

Vulpro’s off-site education efforts included school visits and community outreach programmes, reaching a broad audience across various locations. The approach varied depending on the age group and demographic. For younger audiences, the sessions were more interactive and engaging, using fun and

hands-on activities to capture their interest and foster learning. For older participants, the focus shifted to more in-depth discussions and presentations, offering a deeper understanding of vulture conservation and the ecological importance of these birds. These tailored initiatives aimed to promote a greater appreciation for vultures across all age groups and communities.

- Type: Off-Site Education
- Total Participants: 651

Guided Tours and Special Visits

Guided tours were offered at both Vulpro Hartbeespoort and Shamwari, providing an in-depth, engaging experience about vulture conservation. Special hide visits were also arranged at Hartbeespoort, offering a unique opportunity for participants to observe vultures in their natural environment as well as them practicing their photography skills capturing incoming birds, eating behaviours, etc.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Type: Guided Tours | • Type: Hide Visits |
| • Total Participants: 114 | • Total Participants: 9 |

Off-Site Presentations

Presentations were delivered to community groups and organisations off-site, aiming to raise awareness and provide education on the importance of vulture conservation. These outreach efforts focused on engaging adults and local stakeholders.

- Type: Off-Site Presentations
- Total Participants: 56

Volunteer Support

Resident and local volunteers were instrumental in supporting Vulpro's operations. Live-in volunteers helped with daily tasks such as feeding, rescues, and maintenance at Vulpro Hartbeespoort, while day volunteers contributed to various activities across both locations.

- Type: Resident Volunteers (Live-In)
- Type: Local Volunteers (Day Volunteers)
- Total Participants: 5
- Total Participants: 81

Training Workshops

Vulpro conducted two important workshops to enhance the skills of the team. The first, Educational Training for the outreach team, focused on refining educational engagement strategies. The second, RaptorMed Training, improved staff proficiency in managing medical records for vulture care.

- Type: Educational Training for Outreach Team
- Type: RaptorMed Training (Medical Software)
- Total Participants: 2
- Total Participants: 8

Conclusion

Vulpro's education, outreach, and training efforts in the first quarter of 2025 have significantly enhanced the understanding and appreciation of vultures among diverse groups. These initiatives are essential in changing attitudes and perceptions around vultures.

Educating children is particularly crucial, as they are the most curious and influential generation – poised to lead future conservation efforts. By instilling a passion for wildlife protection at an early age, we are shaping a more environmentally-conscious future. Through continued engagement, Vulpro remains dedicated to educating the public and training its team, ensuring long-term success in vulture conservation and, more importantly, helping people understand the often-misunderstood bird of prey.





Education Highlights

Blouberg Education Outreach

On 21 January 2025, a team from Vulpro, including a representative from Sebakwe Conservation and Education, travelled to Blouberg in Limpopo Province to re-establish connections with Marumofase Secondary School (Grades 11 and 12) and Boikhutsho Primary School (Grades 6 and 7). This engagement marked Vulpro's first educational outreach of the year and laid a strong foundation for continued conservation awareness in the region.

A total of 170 learners were reached across both schools. Educational sessions focused on raising awareness of vulture conservation, inspiring the development of vulture ambassadors, and encouraging positive attitudes toward environmental stewardship among the youth.

In addition to the school visits, the team facilitated a presentation at Dinoko Lodge for 21 field guide students. These individuals, who are likely to encounter vultures during their careers, were introduced to the critical role they can play in identifying and assisting injured or distressed birds. Their engagement is vital in ensuring vultures are monitored and supported throughout the region.

The Blouberg outreach proved highly effective, not only in educating learners and field guides but also in advancing Vulpro's mission to foster long-term, community-based conservation efforts. The visit strengthened local awareness and reinforced the collective responsibility of safeguarding vultures and their habitats.



World Wildlife Day – Soccer Tournament and Community Engagement



On 8 March 2025, in celebration of World Wildlife Day, the Shamwari-based education team hosted a community-focused event in Paterson, Eastern Cape. Designed to merge conservation education with community spirit, the event attracted approximately 250 attendees, including schoolchildren, teachers, and local residents.

The highlight of the day was a dynamic soccer tournament, complemented by a range of interactive, conservation-themed activities. Educational stations, games, and discussion spaces were set up to engage participants of all ages, with a particular focus on the importance of protecting vultures and other endangered species.

The event successfully combined fun with meaningful learning, leaving participants with both lasting memories and a stronger understanding of conservation principles. The positive atmosphere fostered community cohesion while promoting the message that protecting wildlife is a shared responsibility.

By integrating sport and education, the event demonstrated that conservation efforts can be accessible, engaging, and impactful. It stands as a testament to the power of creative, community-led initiatives in building awareness and encouraging participation in wildlife protection.

Media Coverage and Public Engagement

In the first quarter of 2025, Vulpro experienced a substantial increase in media exposure compared to the same period in 2024. Total media mentions rose by 25%, from 32 in 2024 to 40 in 2025, with notable growth in both national and international coverage.

Media formats in 2025 diversified, incorporating not only print and online articles but also an uptake in radio, television segments, and video content. International exposure expanded significantly, with global outlets such as BBC and CNN covering Vulpro's conservation efforts, contributing to a broader reach, particularly in Europe and North America. This contrasts with 2024, where the focus remained largely on South African media, although international mentions still garnered attention, especially from CNN.

Vulpro's media presence in 2025 extended beyond traditional outlets, with radio and podcast features, including an interview regarding the recovery of Cape Vultures. Media coverage also expanded to digital platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, helping to increase the organisation's digital footprint. The return of the Cape Vultures to South Africa, after more than 30 years, was a pivotal moment for conservation efforts, drawing significant media attention both locally and globally.

Social media engagement saw a marked increase in 2025, with notable growth in followers across platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. This growth was driven by interactive and educational campaigns, including live Q&A

sessions and viral posts, reflecting a strategic shift towards more dynamic content. In comparison, 2024's social media engagement remained steady, primarily driven by updates and educational posts, with a more localised audience base in South Africa.

The first quarter of 2025 also saw increased engagement through digital platforms.

Through dynamic campaigns, including real-time conservation updates and direct community engagement via live sessions, Vulpro amplified its reach and solidified its international presence. This contrasted with 2024, where digital efforts were still emerging, focusing primarily on informative posts and local media. This shift in media exposure highlights Vulpro's growing prominence within both the local and international conservation landscape, marked by increased visibility, media diversity, and enhanced digital engagement. The data clearly suggests that 2025 is set to build upon last year's solid foundation, indicating an upward trajectory in both outreach and impact.

In summary, Vulpro's media exposure has grown remarkably between 2024 and 2025, with both national and international coverage expanding, a broader digital reach, and more impactful media interactions. The rising trend indicates that Vulpro is moving from a largely local conservation narrative to a global one, with enhanced visibility and engagement across multiple channels.





Academic Collaborations and Scientific Publications

Scientific research remains a cornerstone of Vulpro's vulture conservation efforts. Our latest peer-reviewed publications contribute valuable insights into vulture ecology and the threats these species face, reinforcing our commitment to evidence-based conservation.

Lindner, K. L., Farwig, N., Albrecht, J., Botha, A. J., Downs, C. T., Höfs, C., Kemp, R., Krüger, S. C., Neethling, M. V., Naser, W., Pfeiffer, M. B., Ruffle, A. R., Spatz, T., Venter, J. A., van der Westhuizen, R., Wolter, K., Rösner, S., & Schabo, D. G. (2024). **Land cover and powerline density influence movement patterns of an African vulture species.** *Manuscript in preparation.*

McKechnie, A. E., et al. (2024). **Effects of lead on avian thermoregulation in the heat: Experimental test with pied crows (*Corvus albus*).** *Journal of Experimental Biology.* Submitted to *Journal of Experimental Biology*, reviewed by two experts, and deemed acceptable for publication in ETAP, pending minor revisions.

McKechnie, A. E., Freeman, M. T., Kemp, K., Wolter, K., & Naidoo, V. (2024). **Effects of lead on avian thermoregulation in the heat: An experimental test with pied crows (*Corvus albus*).** *Journal of Environmental Toxicology and Pharmacology.* Manuscript submitted.

Naidoo, V., & Wolter, K. (2024). **Validation of the Lead Care II System in Cape vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) in comparison to ICP-MS using pure standards.** *Environmental Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 110, 104530.

Pepler, L. F., Rautenbach, Y., Wolter, K., & Koeppel, K. N. (2024). **Leukocyte reference intervals and influencing factors in Cape vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*).** *Manuscript in preparation.*

Serratos, J., et al. (2024). **Tracking data highlight the importance of human-induced mortality for migratory birds at a flyway scale.** *Biological Conservation.* Awaiting final manuscript from journal for full citation.



***Circling together
for Vultures...***

Adoptions

At Vulpro, we believe in circling together – in shared purpose, quiet strength, and the meaningful bonds that form when people choose to protect the vulnerable.

To our extraordinary adopters: your compassion gives our non-releasable vultures more than just care. You offer them safety, dignity, and a renewed sense of belonging. Through your support, these birds are no longer symbols of loss, but of endurance and purpose. Each adoption is a thread in the wider fabric of conservation. You help us turn survival into sanctuary, and presence into legacy.

Adopter

Alexander H (Silke)
Andrea Schreier
Cameron Switzer
Dr Diana Deblanc
Frank Schöppner
Hans & Ute Schute
Katey Parson
Kerry Whyte
Kim Caldwell
Mariza Hamman
Michelle Hurley
Mike & Amy Latimer
Miranda Estensen
Peaconwood College
Robyn (Rob Rankine)
Sarel Venter
Sascha Winninger (for Julie Edgley)

Adopted Vulture(s)/Memberships

Kira-Mathilda & Bacchus Carlo
Johnny
Antonio
Shikis & Gladys
Fenja
Lucky
Resilience
Family membership
Percy
Orpheus & Athanael
Vinny
John Travulture + Family membership
Liebchen
Zazu
Phoenix
Single Plus membership
Amala

Why Adopt a Vulture?

Adopting a vulture is not simply a gesture – it's a powerful commitment to the preservation of a species on the brink of extinction.

By becoming an adopter, you align yourself with a visionary conservation movement that transcends the notion of survival, fostering a deep and lasting connection with nature.

Together, we are soaring toward a brighter future where every vulture's life is valued, and their stories are celebrated.

As an adopter, you will receive:

- Exclusive naming rights for your adopted vulture
- A personalised certificate and photographs to commemorate your contribution
- Regular updates on the progress of your vulture
- The opportunity for a private visit, by appointment
- Quarterly and annual reports detailing our broader conservation efforts



For more information or to adopt, please contact us at: admin@vulpro.com

Sponsors

PLATINUM

- Shamwari Private Game Reserve
- Tusk Trust

GOLD

- DHL
- Ford Wildlife Foundation

SILVER

- Abraham Foundation
- Blair Drummond Safari and Adventure Park
- Cheyenne Mountain Zoo
- Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden
- Colchester Zoo
- Dallas Zoo
- Detroit Zoo
- Different Foundation
- Fort Wayne Children's Zoo
- Hair of the Dog Conservation Fund
- Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust
- Olsen Animal Trust
- Zoo Zlín - Lešná
- Human Society International/Africa
- Ingrid and Rudi Gerlo
- Jacksonville Zoo
- Lomas Wildlife Protection Trust
- Max Planck Institute
- Nashville Zoo
- National Center for Birds of Prey
- Natural Encounters Conservation
- San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
- Wilhelma Zoologisch BotanischerGarten
Stuttgart Zoo

BRONZE

- Animal Survival International
- Bateleurs
- Designline Graphics
- Gauntlet Conservation Trust
- Greenville Zoo
- Idea Wild
- The International Association of
Avian Trainers and Educators ...
- Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo
- Rheinmetall Denel Munition (RDM)
- Sophie Danforth Award – Roger Williams Zoo
- St Augustine Alligator Farm
- Tandy Foundation
- Tulsa Zoo
- World Bird Sanctuary
- Zoo Miami Wildlife Conservation Fund

BLUE

- Akron Zoo
- Darwin Chambers
- Cybercom
- Little Rock Zoo
- Longside Piggery
- Veterinary Conservation Coalition
- Wan4U
- Duxbury Networking
- GHB Farms Pty Ltd
- R&R Abattoir
- Summerplace Game Reserve



Vulpro's continued success in vulture conservation is driven by the unwavering support of our sponsors and adopters. Their contributions are integral to the preservation of endangered vulture species and the protection of their habitats. The collective commitment of our partners strengthens our ability to tackle the challenges ahead and make a lasting impact on vulture conservation.



Tools for Conservation:

Help Vulpro Protect and Preserve Vultures

Stationery Supplies

- Laminating sheets
- Super glue
- Printer paper (A4, 80gsm or higher preferred)
- Printer ink (HP 912XL – black and colour cartridges)
- Printer ink (HP GT53xl black ink bottle, GT52 Magenta, Cyan, and Yellow ink bottles)
- Printer cartridge (Pantum PC-252)
- Lithium AA batteries
- Pens (black, blue, and red)
- Punch (hole puncher)
- Plastic sleeves (A4 size)
- Envelopes (various sizes)
- Pencils (HB and mechanical)
- File dividers
- Clipboards (A4 size, durable)
- Filing cabinet (lockable, multi-drawer preferred)
- Stationery cupboard (lockable, spacious for organised storage)
- Exam pads
- Whiteboard markers
- Permanent markers
- Envelopes (all sizes)

Cleaning Products

- Washing powder (suitable for sensitive skin if possible)
- Clean Green (multi-purpose cleaner)
- Toilet paper
- Sunlight liquid (dishwashing liquid)
- Domestos (disinfectant)
- Savlon (antiseptic liquid)
- Dettol hand wash (antibacterial)
- Scrubbing brushes (various sizes)
- Outdoor brooms (heavy-duty)
- Washing sponges (durable)
- Clothes pegs
- Handy Andy

Maintenance Equipment

- Large and medium cable ties (UV-resistant preferred)
- Insulation tape (various colours if possible)
- Duct tape (heavy-duty)
- Brush cutter
- Lawn mower
- Chainsaw
- Ladder (6m high)
- Garden rakes (metal-tined and plastic-tined)
- Garden shears
- Spades
- Butcher's knives for cutting carcasses (stainless steel, durable)
- Sprinklers
- Hosepipes and fittings
- Garden scissors
- Pliers
- Toolbox
- Hammer
- Spanners
- Drill and hand chuck (for maintenance use)
- Drill bits (various sizes)
- Wood oil (for treating wooden structures)
- Wood preservative
- Epoxy glue (green and white box, rapid setting)
- Paint brushes
- Shovels

Hospital Equipment

- Drapes (sterile and non-sterile)
- Surgical gowns (disposable and reusable)
- Ex Fix cement (external fixation cement)
- Suture material (various sizes and absorbability)
- Cold sterilisation trays
- Karbodust
- Vet wrap (bandaging)
- Paraffin gauze (for wound care)
- Granuflex (wound dressing)
- Gauze (100mm x 100mm)
- Cotton wool
- Paper towel rolls
- Elastoplast adhesive plaster rolls (all sizes)
- Scissors



Our pledge.

"Vulpro will partner with anyone who will help us tell our story and make a real difference.

We promise to do whatever it takes to help vultures in need.

To grow their populations once more.

To share scientific data and research to better understand vultures.

To educate society about their importance to our planet.

We work closely, directly, and on-the-ground with people and communities in contact with vultures.

We collaborate with like-minded people, businesses, and organisations who share the same values.

We raise the profile of vultures by celebrating their beauty, character and uniqueness.

Just like vultures ... we cannot do it alone.

We need to circle together.

We need your help to rewrite the story and get these life-changing birds back into the skies in greater and greater numbers."

"Vulpro has a way of changing peoples lives, of truly leaving a mark on every single individual that passes through the gates"

— Kerri Wolter, CEO, Vulpro

kerri@vulpro.com | +27 82 808 5113 | www.vulpro.com