

Critically endangered Lappet-faced Vulture chick hatches on Heritage Day

A critically endangered Lappet-faced Vulture chick hatched today, 24 September at Vulpro's captive breeding facility based at Shamwari Private Game Reserve in the Eastern Cape. Born on Heritage Day, this birth marks a monumental first for Vulpro in a crucial victory in the fight against extinction for one of Africa's most threatened birds of prey. It also serves as a reminder that vultures are part of our unique South African heritage worth preserving.



This is no ordinary hatching. **With only 180 breeding pairs remaining in wild** South African populations, every single chick represents hope for a species teetering on the brink. What makes this achievement even more extraordinary is that Lappet-faced Vultures are notoriously **difficult to breed in captivity**, with only a handful of facilities worldwide managing to produce fertile eggs resulting in captive bred offspring.

Kerri Wolter, CEO of Vulpro, has dedicated her life to vulture conservation.

She says, “the numbers are stark. **Lappet-faced Vultures are among Africa's most endangered raptors**, and their breeding challenges make every success story vital. These magnificent birds are extremely anxious and sensitive creatures that take considerably longer to form pairs than other vulture species, making Vulpro's achievement all the more remarkable.”

Unlike Vulpro's usual practice of releasing captive bred offspring back to the wild, this precious chick will remain as part of their captive breeding programme to build up captive populations, with the end goal and producing offspring for release in support of the dwindling populations. The decision reflects the desperate conservation status of the species, with this hatchling destined to play a critical role in building a genetically diverse assurance population.

Vulpro is now calling for unprecedented collaboration with organisations worldwide working with Lappet-faced Vultures to establish a coordinated captive population. Their ultimate goal remains unchanged: to build sustainable, releasable populations that can strengthen wild numbers.

The success of our captive breeding programme would not be possible without our partnership with Shamwari Private Game Reserve and our funders namely: Ingrid and Rudi Gerlo, Humane World for Animals South Africa, Gauntlet Conservation Trust, Land Rover – Defender, National Centre for Birds of Prey, Olsen Animal Trust, Tusk Trust and Zoo Zlin and Cincinnati Zoo.

For more information please visit www.vulpro.com