



THE VULPRO FLYER NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021

Protecting African vultures through collaboration and innovation



VulPro NPC - Vulture programme for the conservation of vulture species in southern Africa

Registration no.2011/127419/08 (The Companies Act 2008, Sec.14)

The VulPro Newsletter

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A Word From Our CEO

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Executive Summary

December is a time for contemplation to reflect on our conservation work and how our work has positively impacted African vultures. Coming into 2021, one of our core focus areas was to grow and strengthen partnerships, and during the past six months, those partnerships have truly blossomed.

In partnership with the Detroit Zoo, and after two long years, all five of the Detroit Zoo African vultures were returned to their home soil and now reside at VulPro. This partnership is the first of its kind and represents a monumental step in wildlife conservation. Notably, this is the first movement of critically endangered African vultures from the USA back to their native continent and is only possible because of the existence of VulPro's specialised facility. It is a testament to the conservation ethics of Detroit Zoo and the quality care their staff members provided to the birds. It is also a testament to working together to preserve African vultures for generations to come, incorporating in-situ and ex-situ conservation practices.

In partnership with Cape Nature, the De Hoop Nature Reserve, Walter Naser and Biotherm, VulPro also successfully fitted nine tracking devices to the first Cape Vulture fledglings of the Potberg colony – a unique stand-alone colony in the Western Cape. This colony is fairly isolated, and there is limited knowledge of their movements, that is, up until now, as we hope to shed light on their movements to avoid this colony being negatively impacted by pending wind farm developments.

And lastly, our relationships with the University of Pretoria continue to grow. With multiple research projects underway and in the pipeline, we are excited to work and collaborate with a top-notch local university that offers high-end quality science that contributes to knowledge generation aimed at species survival and how best to conserve African vultures. Our relationships with landowners and farmers have truly gained momentum. They are the real heroes who protect Africa's vultures by supplying food, bathing and drinking water and suitable breeding and roosting areas. They are also our ears and eyes for any compromised birds needing help.

Our conservation efforts cannot be achieved in isolation, and it is through these relationships and partnerships, as well as those with YOU, our funders, supporters and followers, that 2021 has been, yet again, a huge success. This newsletter edition sheds light on some of those successes over the past six months.

In closing, I would like to wish you, your family and loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Yours in conservation,
Kerri

Vulture Rescue & Rehabilitation

As usual, from June to November, our focus at VulPro has been on our captive breeding programme, with the rehabilitation programme picking up again at the end of November. However, this does not mean we do not get in cases and as such, we have had 33 rehabilitation cases over the past 6 months. These cases included 24 Cape Vultures and four African White-backed Vultures, as well as two African Fish-Eagles, a Black Kite, a Martial Eagle and a Spotted Eagle-Owl. The most significant cause for admissions was again power line collisions with 12 cases. Some of our other prevalent reasons for admission have been poisonings (four), electrocutions (two) and animal attacks (two).

With so many of these cases being power line collisions, it is often the case that we end up with birds that have broken bones beyond the point of no return, leading to either wing amputations or euthanasia depending on the extent of the damage. For this reason, we are always on the lookout for ways to improve our rehabilitation care and give these birds the best possible chance for release. We have also been incredibly grateful for the hard work of the vets at Bryanston Exotic, Avian and Small Animal Clinic and the Broederstroom Vet Clinic. The two teams were able to repair two cases of broken bones, giving these birds a second chance at survival and release.

The first of these birds was a young Cape Vulture from the Lichtenburg Nature Reserve, North West Province. This immature Cape Vulture struck power lines and came away with a broken left wing. Usually, a broken wing means that a bird will spend the rest of its life in captivity, but the team at Bryanston Animal Clinic was able to pin this bird's wing, healing the bone correctly. She has come through the treatment exceptionally well and has since had the pins removed. She is currently still residing at VulPro while we observe her for a few more weeks and, with luck, she will soon be released.



Orange Black 17 arrives from Lichtenburg in a weak state with a broken left wing.

Vulture Rescue & Rehabilitation

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Above: Orange Black 17 is now almost entirely healed, flaunting her left wing in the final stages of her rehabilitation.

The second bird is another Cape Vulture from Blouberg Nature Reserve, Limpopo. An unknown incident left this young bird with a broken leg. A vulture with a broken leg cannot survive in the wild for long and is often a painful or debilitating condition for a bird in captivity. The young bird's leg seemed to be healing well on its own but unfortunately it appeared to need some extra help. On examination the team at Broederstroom Vet Clinic determined they would be able to pin the leg, giving this bird a second chance at life. Turquoise Black 83 is coming to the end of his treatment and will have the pin removed in the coming days. We will then be able to see if he will be releasable, but thus far the team at Broederstroom is confident he will make a full recovery.

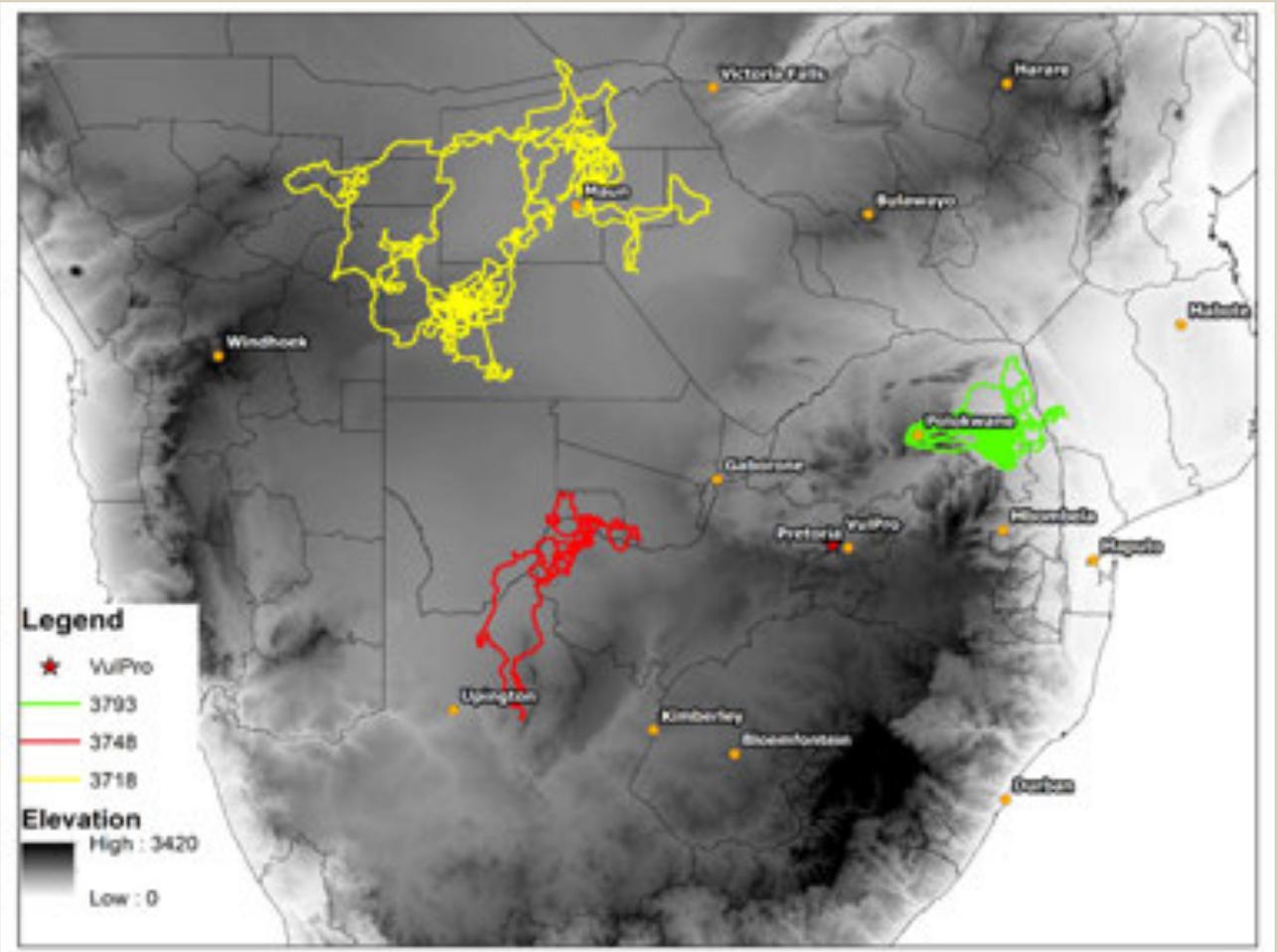


Above: Turquoise Black 83 is coping well with his pinned leg and we look forward to his full recovery.

Vulture Rescue & Rehabilitation

Finally, we love to see how our rehabilitated birds are moving across the landscape after their release. Three of our rehabilitated birds have been moving exceptionally well over the last six months, moving across different countries and over many hundreds of kilometres. We are always pleased to see the success of our rehabilitation work continuing beyond the release of the birds, watching them survive in the wild as they were intended to do. The image below shows the last six months movement of the African White-backed Vulture rescued from the Olifants River Game Reserve, Limpopo, in May 2021, after he was found trapped, with his beak tightly closed from a PVC pipe. Also shown in the map, is the African White-backed Vulture chick rescued from Roedtan, Limpopo, in October 2020, after he was attacked by a plague of dermestid beetles, and an African White-backed Vulture rescued by Shangani Sanctuary, Zimbabwe, in May 2021, after a poisoning incident.

We are looking forward to seeing where they continue to go in the future and how they progress in their new found freedom.



The tracked movements of three African White-backed Vultures rehabilitated by VulPro

Vulture Rescue & Rehabilitation Statistics

Rescue and Rehabilitation Statistics

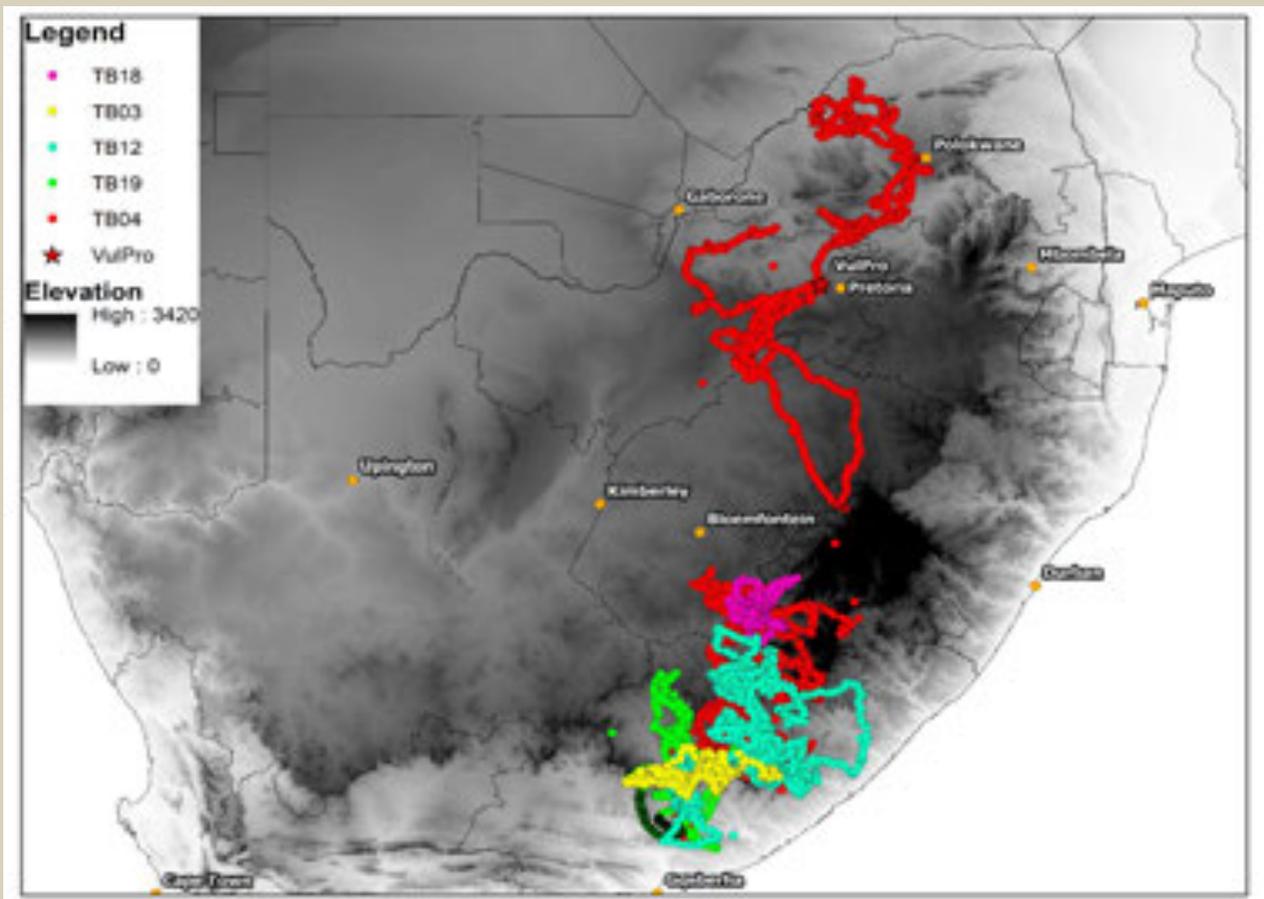
<u>Species</u>	Resident birds at 31 May 2021	New birds brought in since 31 May 2021	Released birds since 31 May 2021	Birds that have died since 31 May 2021	Euthanised birds since 31 May 2021	Transferred birds since 31 May 2021	Resident birds at 30 November 2021
Cape Vulture	183	24	2	3	3		199
African White-backed Vulture	60	4	1	4	1		58
Lappet-Faced Vulture	7	1		1			7
Palm-nut Vulture	3						3
Andean Condor	3						3
Spotted Eagle Owl	3	1			1		3
White-headed Vulture	2						2
Black Vulture	1					1	0
King Vulture	1						1
African Fish Eagle	1	2	1			1	1
Jackal Buzzard	1				1		1
Martial Eagle	0	2		1			1
Hooded Vulture	0	4					4
Total	265	38	4	9	6	2	283

VulPro's Captive Breeding Programme

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The 2021 breeding season has been a huge success as we managed to double the number of captive bred vultures produced. With 15 Cape Vultures, 1 African White-backed Vulture and our first Palm-nut vulture, our conservation breeding programme continues to grow, not just in numbers but in the increase in the number of successfully breeding and producing offspring for conservation purposes.

On another note, all our 2020 captive bred vultures have been released successfully and, so far, we have had no losses. This is a massive achievement and a success story, highlighting how well captive bred vultures adapt to the wild. We have highlighted five of these captive bred birds to showcase their movement from their release in the Eastern Cape near Queenstown, until the 30 November 2021:



TB18 appears to enjoy the Zastron area

TB03, TB12 and TB19 tend to hang around Thomas River valley area and in fairly close proximity to each other in vulture terms.

TB04 has spent some time in the northern parts of South Africa but is back in the Thomas River Valley which appears to be his preference at this stage.

Vulture Population Monitoring

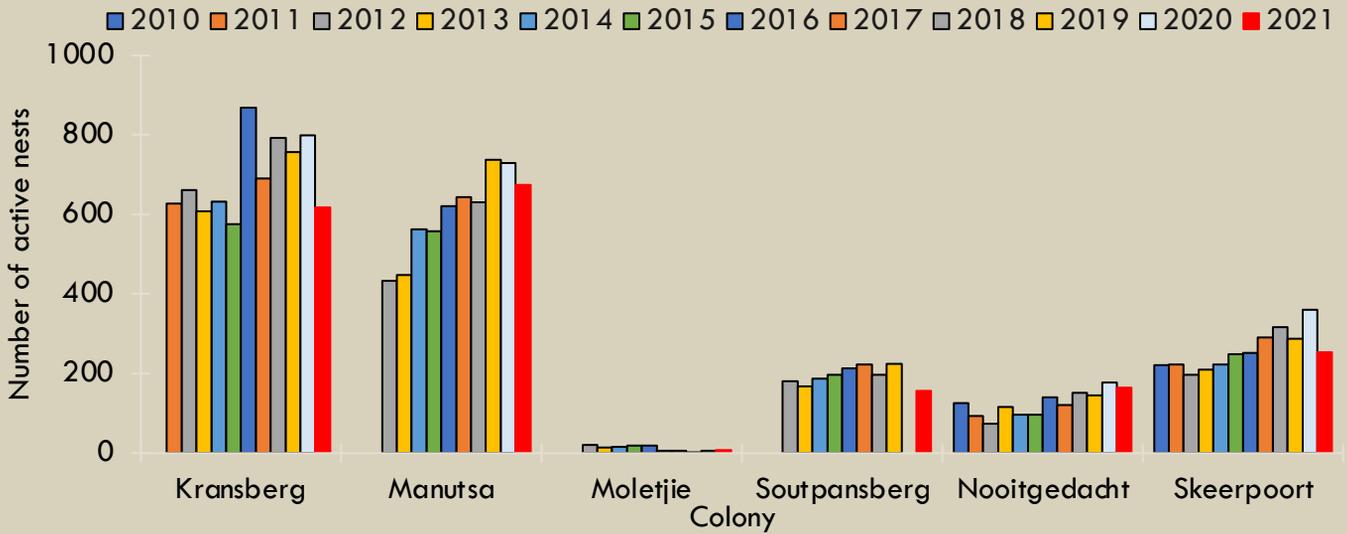
Cape Vulture Breeding Surveys

During 2021, we monitored six Cape Vulture colonies across the northern parts of South Africa. A total of 1875 active nests were observed during the initial surveys. We observed fewer active nests during 2021 compared to 2020, with each colony declining since their initial survey. This is a huge concern. Unfortunately, we do not have exact explanations for these declines, but we do believe human disturbances or climatic conditions such as windy conditions that were observed at the Kransberg and Manutsa colonies can explain some of the possible causes. We are concerned about the Kransberg and Skeerpoort colonies, which declined by ~23% and ~29%, respectively.

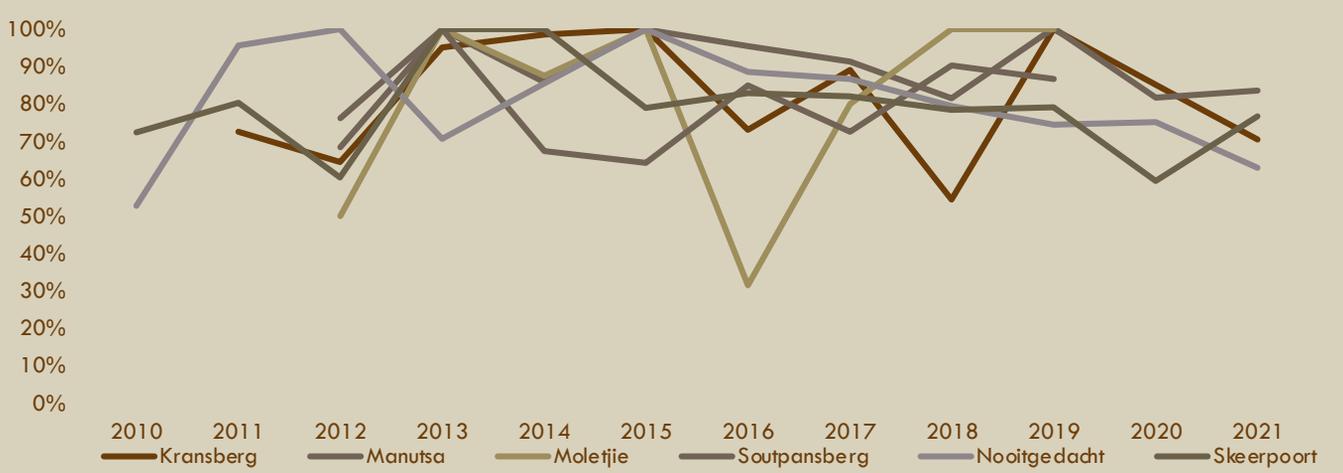
The initial survey in 2022 may shed further light on whether the population is declining or whether these changes are part of annual variation. We will continue to monitor all the colonies closely to see if we can better understand the factors driving the declines in breeding numbers. A total of 1438 fledglings were observed during the final survey this year, with an overall breeding success of 76.7%. The breeding success varied between ~57% and ~86% for Moletjie and Soutpansberg colonies, respectively. Furthermore, the data currently being analysed forms part of a study that looks at individual breeding success and the occupancy dynamics of the individual nests at different colonies.



Culture Population Monitoring



Annual estimates of the number of breeding pairs at each Cape Vulture colony monitored by VulPro throughout South Africa



Annual breeding success at each Cape Vulture colony monitored by VulPro throughout South Africa

Vulture Population Monitoring

Tree Nesting Vulture Surveys

Despite the challenges we faced in 2021 with the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to continue with our tree nesting surveys. This year, we surveyed the Olifants River Game Reserve in Limpopo, the Mareetsane area in the North West Province, the Dwaalboom area, and the Roedtan area in Limpopo. Further, we conducted initial assessments of the Lephalele area in Limpopo and the Tosca area in the North West Province to begin full surveys in 2022.

The Mareetsane area of the North West Province was surveyed twice in 2021, in July and in October. The area consists of three farms, namely Omega Game Ranch (hunting and game farm), Bakoven (pig, cattle and game farm) and La Rancho Farm (hunting and game farm). This year, we could also add a new farm Woodside Lodge (hunting and game farm). In total, we had a success rate of 70% in the area, with 73 successful breeding attempts, despite a large number of nests. However, the area still suffered some declines. This was seen mainly at Woodside Lodge, where the breeding success was 27% (from 15 nests in July to 4 in October).

We are unsure as to the exact reason behind this decline. However, in October, the farm was heavily worked on to clear bush encroachment. One theory is that this disturbance may have caused the decline. We hope to expand further into this landscape in the coming years during our annual surveys.



Vulture Population Monitoring

Summary of VulPro's 2021 vulture monitoring across South Africa

Site	Work	Province	Country	Land Ownership/use
Manutsa	Colony	Limpopo	South Africa	Private residential
Kransberg	Colony	Limpopo	South Africa	Protected government, Marakele National Park
Magaliesberg (Skeerpoort & Nooitgedacht)	Colony	North West and Gauteng	South Africa	Private Biosphere Reserve
Moletjie	Colony	Limpopo	South Africa	Protected Limpopo provincial government
Soutpansberg	Colony	Limpopo	South Africa	Community-owned
Mareetsane Area (four farms in total)	Tree nesting	North West	South Africa	Private game and hunting reserves; pig and cattle farms
Olifants River Private Game Reserve	Tree nesting	Limpopo	South Africa	Private share-holder block
Dwaalboom Area (11 farms in total)	Tree nesting	Limpopo	South Africa	Private farms with various use
Roedtan Area (two farms in total)	Tree nesting	Limpopo	South Africa	Private game and hunting reserves

Vulture Population Monitoring

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Acknowledgements

Vulture counts are only possible with the support of all landowners involved: ASC Farm, Bakoven Farm, Boelani Farm, Bosveld Farm, Cape Vulture Lodge, Dotreg Farm, Griffons Bush Camp, Haakdorn, Groenedal Farm, Laastepoort, La Rancho Farm, Leeuwdoorn Farm, Leopard Lodge, Loggerinde Hoek, Moletje Nature Reserve, Nando Farm, Numzaan Safaris, Olifants River Private Game Reserve, Omega Game Ranch, Plumari Private Reserve, Rooiderbokvale, Soetdoring Farm, Soutpansberg, Swartbos Farm, Ultimo Farm and Woodside Lodge.

In addition, this work would not be possible without financial assistance from Fondation Ensemble, Greenville Zoo, the Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Idea Wild, the International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators and The Tusk Trust.

Thank you to Gert Hamman, Mariza Hamman, Nicky Firer, Norbert Hannweg and Rosemarie Hannweg for assisting with monitoring fieldwork in 2021.

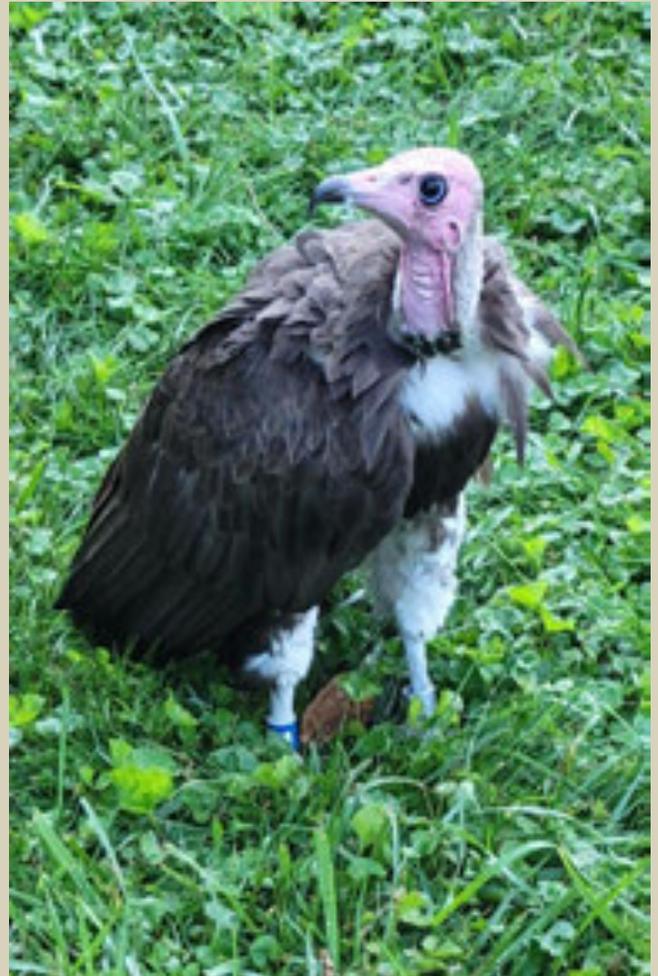


African Vultures Return Home

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With vulture numbers continuously declining across their range, collaborations and multifaceted approaches are becoming more critical to safeguard existing populations. Breeding endangered species in captivity is a conservation tool that protects species' genetics and boosts dwindling wild populations.

Since 2007, VulPro has spearheaded vulture conservation across the continent and worked throughout the globe on critical vulture research projects. In 2011, VulPro's Cape Vulture breeding programme began with the intention of releasing all parent-reared offspring back into the wild. The programme has grown to now include four other African vulture species. After several years of planning, permitting, and preparations, finally, one Lappet-faced Vulture and four Hooded Vultures from the Detroit Zoo have joined the captive birds at VulPro. These birds have endured ground transport, a trans-Atlantic flight, and 60 plus days of quarantine. On the 9 November, these birds were welcomed at VulPro, where they have integrated into the captive breeding population. They will have the opportunity to pair and breed and their offspring will be released into the wild.



Eastern Cape Report

Kate Webster



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Rehabilitation

As usual, during winter the rehab season quietens down, however, I received a call from Mr Isak Jacobs early June about a vulture that had been seen sitting in a corner of a camp in the Burgersdorp/Bethulie area, which was just on the Eastern Cape/Free State border. The poor girl had snapped her wing and had obviously been down on the ground for a day or two. We rehydrated her before heading home and she has now joined the next group of permanently injured birds in the enclosure at Rookwood 'waiting' to grow into adulthood to become part of the captive breeding group. My next call for help came from a previous contact in the Southern Free State near Smithfield. I had collected this very young vulture from them last year and he had found another injured bird which he caught and fed until I could drive up to collect her. The bird clearly had been injured on power lines. While up there, Mr Petzer took me to the sight and we found four other electrocuted birds (earlier and historical incidents). This was indeed very sad considering part of the powerline had already had mitigation work done on it, but it had obviously been incorrectly advised.

In the month of October I received information in about a bird that had gone down in the Winterberg area, near the roost of Mary and Martha and was unable to get up. Thanks must go to Reece Wearing for transporting me via tractor and trailer (the transport crate did look a bit small on the trailer though) to collect this bird. This bird was a stunning sub-adult which appeared to be either paralysed or had injured his spine. Sadly he had fractured both legs very close to his hips when colliding with a transmission line. It was in such good condition and a stunning bird but Elreza Kloppers (one of my vets) had to relieve the vulture of its pain.

My latest rehab was thanks to our neighbour's staff member who alerted us, late one Sunday afternoon, to an injured vulture standing in a driveway on a farm not too far off from home. He confirmed the bird was still there the following morning early and the farmer kindly caught the bird which made collection so much easier. Sadly bad burns on the outer digits will ground this bird for life too and she has now joined the Rookwood aviary of permanently injured birds, bringing the total to six.

The Barn owl chicks which I received earlier this year were soft released from Rookwood. A Jackal Buzzard was passed on to me from the vets (Werner Wentzel), after being checked out for any injury, which lucky it did not have, I released it not long after receiving it. Presently I have a Rock Kestrel that was suffering from secondary poisoning and we are monitoring as it does not react in one eye.



Eastern Cape Report

Kate Webster

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Eskom reporting

As Eskom is presently 'splitting up' into distribution and transmission divisions, we are not sure of what will happen going forward. People regularly report avian collisions and electrocutions to me, and, when possible, I do go out and do a report. I am also presently battling with the Nelson Mandela Bay LM with regards to a line which is killing blue cranes, Denhams Bustards, korhaans and even Jackal Buzzards through collisions every month. The landowner is desperate, and I fully understand his frustrations. I am looking at ultimately going the legal route to assist this person.

I would like to thank all landowners who do report incidents and, in particular, the farming community who are so willing to do so. We have built up a good network and wonderful mutual understanding over the years. This, I regard as a privilege as it is a wonderful collaborate effort.

Date	Infrastructure type	Comments
13.09.2021	Distribution line	5 x Cape vulture electrocutions (one one set of lines) 1 X Cape vulture electrocution (on another line)
14.10.2021	Distribution line	1 x Cape vulture (permanent injury) 4 x Cape vulture electrocutions 1 historical evidence of electrocution
20.10.2021	Distribution line	2x Cape vultures – collisions One of the collisions resulted in a rather large veldt fire. This particular line has subsequently had a Denhams Bustard and a blue crane collide with it.
21.11.2021	Distribution line (presumed)	1 x Cape vulture electrocution Line not identifiable as bird definitely walked from where she was electrocuted



Eastern Cape Report

Kate Webster

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Media and Talks

The Kyknet Kwela programme was aired at the end of July and I feel honoured to have been part of this programme. The vultures themselves are the true heroes really. On 29 June, I was interviewed by Mariska Spoomaker on *RSG 360* about one of the captive bred fledglings that was released at Rookwood and had made its way all the way back to VulPro. An article I wrote highlighting the work VulPro does was published in *Promerops No 321* (Western Cape Bird Club magazine). I was asked to address a pre-primary group of 150 learners as part of their Heritage Day celebrations in Queenstown in September. I continue to represent VulPro at the Predator Management Forum meetings of the NWGA of the Eastern Cape and have recently been appointed to run the environmental section of the Stormberg Branch of the SA Hunters Association with support from the members who assist with the vultures in this province.

Captive Bred Fledgling Partnership Programme

Last year, we entered into a partnership for the captive bred fledglings from VulPro. Initially four fledglings were sent down to Rookwood (together with another wild young bird that I had sent up to VulPro) in September 2019. This group was supplemented with another ten young fledglings, thanks to the wonderful partnership with DHL (Theo) who transported them to Rookwood (door-to-door!) from VulPro on 2 March this year. Some of these birds were already fitted with devices, so we were able to release them on 22 March. One wild rehabilitated bird, called the Tarka bird, was released with a GPS device. The rest of the birds were released much later (15 May), when more devices were secured and we could fit them to the young birds. This journey has been an absolute mind-blowing experience and privilege, and I still am in awe of what they have done. Interestingly, the first group of four birds were very Rookwood attached and currently one of that group still hangs around at Rookwood on top of the aviary. One particular individual flew all the way back to VulPro but has subsequently returned to the Eastern Cape and is presently foraging in the Winterberg range. No. 32 flew up to the Free State (Boshoff area) and then slowly made its way up into Botswana. We have been monitoring their movements with the different GPS platforms that they have been fitted with. Sometimes the devices do not always give us readings and are intermittent, however, in my mind this whole process has been extremely successful.

I have watched the numbers decline on the roof top of the aviary over a period of time and recently no. 26 (one of my first releases) took to 'exploring' the countryside around Rookwood. It was with mixed feelings as I got so used to some of these 'pigeons' (as my children call them – mom's pigeons) just always being there when I go down to the aviary. Hopefully no.s 39 and 14, the remaining two, will join the wild birds as well one day and explore the wide open skies of the Eastern Cape and beyond. I want to thank Kerri and her whole team up at VulPro for trusting me with this process.



Eastern Cape Report

Kate Webster

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General

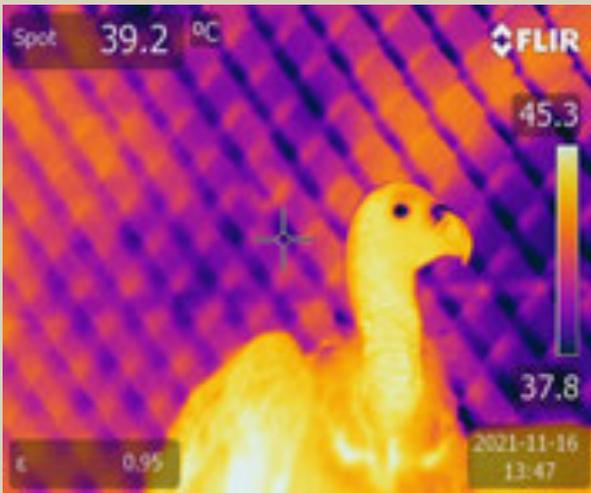
2021 has been a fairly challenging year for me, however, I continue to strive to assist and support the plight of the Cape Vulture, not only in this province but generally. There have been some highlights, despite the challenges: the captive bred fledgling partnership, in particular, the hybrid vulture – Cape/Rüppels (confirmed by blood tests) that I collected more than two years ago that resides at VulPro, the Kwela programme broadcast on KykNet, to name a few. I am indeed fortunate to be able to work with these birds and, hopefully, be able to continue to do so for some time. Of course none of this is possible without the support of my children, Kevin and Joy, my vets, Werner and Elreza, the food supply from Dave Osborne through Vivian and Abraham (No. 2 Piggeries) and then Dean Ricketts, Tim de Jongh and Div de Villiers from DEDEAT. Kerri, Ryno and Caroline of VulPro thank you for your continuous support and backup. I thank my sponsors **Lomas Wildlife Protection Trust** and **DHL Express** as I would not be able to do the work without their funding and support too.

In conclusion, with some very bad veldt fires during the latter part of a bitter cold winter in the Eastern Cape, in our area, there is nothing but nothing that beats that emotional joy in your heart when you drive past a group of vultures feeding from a fire victim carcass (livestock) and you realise that one of those birds is actually a captive bred fledgling that has spent some time in your aviary and is now a free flying wild bird, doing what all vultures should be doing, cleaning up our earth!

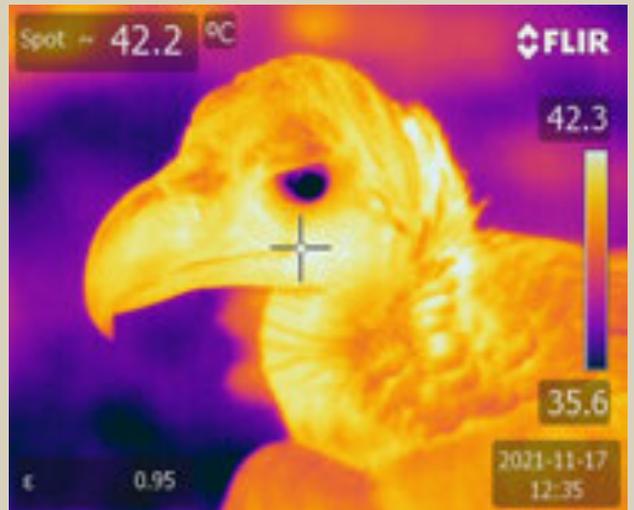


Research & Publications

At VulPro, our research aims to positively benefit African vultures and influence conservation strategies, preserving and conserving the species to prevent their extinction. This year we only published two scientific articles putting certain publications on hold due to technical issues. However, we submitted another scientific paper, which is currently under revision. Despite only a few publications this year, our work has been cited the most since 2006, with 169 citations — this high number of citations shows the importance of our work. Also, our work is reaching more people. Furthermore, another three publications are almost ready for publication and will be submitted before the end of 2021, and four more will be submitted during the first half of 2022.



A Cape Vulture excreting a fluid through its nostrils to cool down parts of the beak



A closeup thermal image of our newest member from Detroit with the beak and facial skin temperature ranging from ~40 – 42.3°C.

Throughout 2021, VulPro has been collaborating on some exciting projects. One such project is in collaboration with the University of Pretoria. This project gives novel insights into the thermoregulatory abilities of vulture species by looking at the beak and facial skin as heat radiators in three African vulture species using a thermal camera. Another project that will add value to the conservation of African vultures using supplementary feeding sites considers the impact of supplementary feeding sites on the breeding success of Cape vultures. This project has been in the making for a couple of years and we hope to publish it early in 2022. The third project of utmost importance for conserving African vultures in human-populated areas around the Magaliesberg investigates the drivers influencing the movement ecology of two African vultures. Lastly, a project, which has just started, looks at the movement behaviour and survival rate of Cape Vultures in the Western Cape. This study provides renewable energy developers with valuable information on the movement behaviour of vultures in and around the Overberg region to avoid future collisions with wind turbines. VulPro fitted nine tracking devices to nestlings at Potberg during October and hope to fit another 11 tracking devices to adults during January 2022.

Only some projects are listed here. You can follow our research in our monthly reports and on social media.

Research & Publications

Publications for 2021

1. Curk T., Scacco M., Safi, K., Wikelski M., Fiedler W., **Kemp R.** and **Wolter K.**, 2021. Wing tags severely impair movement in African Cape Vultures. *Animal Biotelemetry*, 9(1), pp.1-13.
2. Galligan T.H., Green R.E., **Wolter, K.**, Taggart M.A., Duncan N., Mallord J.W., Alderson D., Li, Y. and Naidoo, V., 2022. The non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug nimesulide kills Gyps vultures at concentrations found in the muscle of treated cattle. *Science of The Total Environment*, 807, p.150788 .

Publications Submitted/In Prep

1. Kane A., Monadjem A., Bildstein K., Botha A., Bracebridge C., Buechley E.R., Buij R., Davies J.P., Diekmann M., Downs C., Farwig N., Galligan T., Kaltenecker G., Kelly C., **Kemp R.**, Kolberg H., MacKenzie M., Mendelsohn J., Mgumba M., Nathan R., Nicholas A., Ogada D., Pfeiffer M.B., Phipps W.L., Pretorius M., Rösner S., Schabo D.G., Spiegel O., Thompson L.J., Venter J.A., Virani M., **Wolter K.**, Kendall C. (*Submitted*) Size doesn't matter; it's how you use it: Using continent-wide variation in ranging behaviour of vultures to assess the feasibility of Vulture Safe Zones in Africa. *Biology Conservation*.
2. Aspenström S., **Kemp R.**, **Howard A.**, **Hannweg, C.G.**, Chetty K., Briers R.A. & **Wolter K.** (*In Prep*) The threat of power lines on two African Vulture species.
3. Casey, J., **Kemp, R.**, **Hannweg, C.G.**, **Hirschauer M.T.**, **Naidoo, V.** & **Wolter, K.** (*In Prep*) Lead poisoning may not contribute to power line collisions amongst African Vultures.
4. Cervantes F., Murgatroyd M., Allan D., **Kemp R.**, Kruger S., Maude G., Mendelsohn J., Rosner S., Schabo D.G., Tate G., **Wolter K.** and Amar A. (*In Prep*) A partially explicit collision risk model for the Endangered Cape Vulture to guide wind energy development.
5. Brink C.W., Zimunya T., **Kemp R.**, **Wolter K.** and Thomson R. (*In Prep*). The effect of supplementary feeding on breeding success in the Endangered Cape Vulture, *Gyps coprotheres*
6. MacLeod N., **Kemp R.**, **Hannweg CG.**, **Wolter K.**, Warren B. and Keith Mark. (*In Prep*) Examining the foraging ranges and behaviours of two African vultures in Gauteng and North-West Provinces of South Africa.
7. Hirschauer M.T., Hannweg C.G., Kemp R. and Wolter K. (*In Prep*) VulPro: An overview of Africa's Vulture Conservation Centre.



Vulture Fun Facts

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World's Oldest Flute

What does the world's oldest flute have to do with vultures?



Well, quite a lot, actually.

The world's oldest known musical instrument is a 35,000- to 40,000-year-old flute made of a vulture bone. This unique flute was found in caves in Ulm, Germany.

The fully intact five-holed flute, made from a griffon vulture's radius bone, was discovered in the caves. Also found in nearby caves, a three-holed flute made from mammoth ivory and two flutes made from the wing bones of a mute swan (<https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=2222>).

You can listen to a recording made on the scientific reconstruction of the flute played and composed by Albin Paulus, called 'Weiß der Geier' roughly translated as the 'wife of the vulture'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obTQG1i4A78>

Image: H Jensen. Copyright: University of Tübingen

Vulture Fun Facts

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The background of the central text area features several faint, grey line-art illustrations. On the left side, there are four markers of different colors (green, blue, yellow, and red) scattered around. On the right side, there are two large, stylized outlines of vultures, one above the other, facing left. The text 'EISH, I DIDN'T KNOW!' is centered in this area.

**EISH,
I DIDN'T
KNOW!**

Carcasses or parts of carcasses **contaminated with lead from ammunition** and placed at vulture restaurants or otherwise left in the veld may **poison vultures, ground hornbills & other scavengers.**

YOU can help by using **lead-free alternatives** and/or by **removing** any potentially lead-contaminated carcasses from the veld.

P_b LEAD TASK TEAM South Africa

More Vulture Fun Facts

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Vulture's Tummy

Vultures have very strong stomach acid. Much stronger than ours, because of this they can eat foods that would make us sick.

This is also very important because farm animals and wild animals can get sick and die and the vultures can still eat their carcasses.

A vulture saves the lives of hundreds of other animals and people by eating the carcass of an animal that died because of an illness this stops the illness from spreading.



Our Adoptions

Our adoption programme allows members of the public to get up close and personal with our conservation efforts; by giving them the opportunity to contribute to a culture's care for a year. Many of our adoptive parents have chosen to adopt a breeding bird and this December, with our captive breeding programme drawing to a close, we have decided to highlight six of these adopted birds that successfully produced a chick this year.

Cosmic Goddess, adopted by Xyla Holland, was a first-time parent this year! On 17 July 2021, her and her partner TB 40 hatched PW 12, after incubating the egg for the full term. They have raised this chick successfully and PW 12 will be released in the coming months .



*Right: Cosmic Goddess adopted by Xyla Holland
Below: Delilah adopted by Tracey Robinson*



2021 was another great year for Delilah, adopted by Tracey Robinson. Delilah laid two eggs this year, the first of which was raised by foster parents Conan and Sherry, adopted by Jonathan Chaplin. The second egg she laid was hatched and raised by herself and her partner GB 69. Both PW 01 and PW 09 are growing well and will be released in the near future. Last year Delilah was unfortunately not successful, but in 2019 she had two successful chicks both of whom have been successfully released.

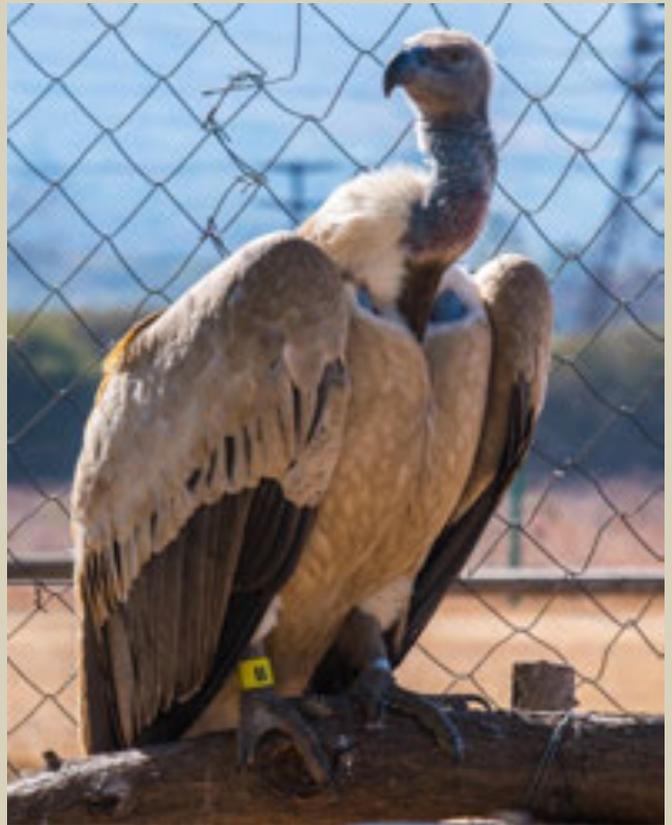


Our Adoptions

Tristan and Isolde, adopted by Mariza Hamman, were successful parents once again this year. Their youngster, Papageno, also adopted by Mariza Hamman, is doing exceptionally well and will be released in the near future. Tristan and Isolde were unfortunately unsuccessful in 2020 but in 2019 had two successful chicks who have both been successfully released.



Tristan adopted by Mariza Hamman.



Isolde adopted by Mariza Hamman.



Our Adoptions

Conan and Sherry, adopted by Jonathan Chaplin, were unfortunately not successful with their own egg this year, but were able to successfully incubate and raise PW 01, the first egg laid by Delilah and GB 69. The youngster, pictured in the bottom photo with Conan in July 2021, is growing extremely well and will be released in the near future.



Sherry (in the foreground) adopted by Jonathan Chaplin.

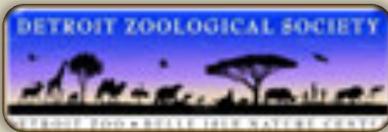


Conan with his chick, Purple White 01.



Our thanks again to the incredibly generous individuals who have adopted these birds! Their extended care would not be possible without your contributions, ensuring that each bird has the best chance of laying a viable egg and successfully raising a chick, destined for release. If you would be interested in adopting a vulture at VulPro , contributing to vulture conservation in southern Africa, please contact info@vulpro.com for more information.

With thanks to our Sponsors



Lomas Wildlife Protection Trust

