

VULTURE CONSERVATION PROJECT

BCSG Surat chapter and Nature Club Surat have taken up a project of Vulture Conservation. Many activities are carried out for the said project and we have often noticed some positive response for the same. Many a times we find people from the villages or school children informing us about the dead vulture or a sick vulture which has fallen down the tree from its nest or roosting sites. Up till now the villagers were unaware of the importance of Vultures in our life and so due to various awareness programs conducted in the villages nearby the Hazira Coastal area people and students have come forward and led a helping hand. To mention few of the activities and the report of the same for the past four months is briefed as under:

Ø Vultures are mainly found in the Coastal area of Hazira which is near Surat. Many villages are covered in this region. To name few of them are Suvali, Junagam, Rajgiri, Damka, Hazira and Mora. In these villages awareness programs are being conducted and a film on Vanishing Vulture which is in the local language is shown to them. Many T-Shirts and booklet named "Chalo Gidh Bachavie" are also distributed. These kinds of programs are not only carried out in Surat but also in Mahuva, Kodinar and Rajula. Many of the primary and secondary schools are covered in these regions by explaining the students the importance of Vulture in our Eco-System and their role and as to why save them.

Ø Vultures are facing a serious problem of food. They do not get proper food to feed on to keep them going. The food sometimes they feed on is not Diclofenac free. So to provide Vultures with a Diclofenac free food we have started a 'Vulture Feeding Site' in the nearby area of Hazira where Vultures can easily get food. We have arranged meetings with almost all the shepards staying nearby this area and explained them the current situation of the Vultures and the problems they are facing for getting food. We have informed them about the after effects of the situation as to how the environment would turn out to be if the dead cattle and rotten Caracas are not disposed off properly which can end up spreading various diseases also. And so they have agreed to give their dead cattle as and when they have for Vulture feeding. They inform us about the death and we collect it from there as early as possible and dump them at the feeding site. Another important thing which remains to be mentioned here is that we have also a good support from the village people around and also a butcher (Chamar) who helps us in giving this food after skinning it. As soon as the call is received of the dead cattle he rushes to the place and takes it to the feeding site and after skinning it leaves it for the Vultures. We inform the Sheppard's how dangerous the Diclofenac is and which can cause death of the Vultures.

Ø At regular intervals Vulture counts are taken at various places of Hazira and Dangs in South Gujarat. Apart from this volunteers also keep a track and watch on Vultures of Mahuva district along with Rajula and Kodinar. The Vulture population in Surat is keeping quiet steady due to the efforts and care taken for their food. If any sick or injured Vulture is rescued it is taken good care of and than released back in the same place of their nesting site or it is transferred to Junagadh if it is a serious case which cannot be attended over here. This of course is done with the help and permission of Forest Department.

Ø We have also arranged meetings with many Veterinary doctors of Surat district and informed them about the side effects of Diclofenac medicine which is given to the sick cattle as a pain killer. These activities are also done in Mahuva, Rajula and Kodinar. This medicine has proved to be most dangerous to Vultures as they feed on the dead cattle which have been treated by this medicine. On the other hand we supply them with 'Meloxicam' a substitute

medicine. This medicine is very expensive than the former one but we supply at subsidized rates to the Veterinary doctors. The supply is provided to them as and when needed. We also send the same drug to Mahuva, Rajula and Kodinar for distribution. So far more than 2,000 bottles of Meloxicam have been distributed.

Ø Apart from this many of the Panjarapoles of Gujarat have also been contacted and informed about the deadly medicine and requested not to use it for the sick cattle but use Meloxicam instead.

This project has to go on for long time but very soon we are going to run out of funds and we hope that soon someone will surely come forward to help us out.

for detail's can contact www.natureclubsurat.org

Nature Club Surat

info@natureclubsurat.org, natureclubsurat81@gmail.com