

Released of rescued Himalayan Vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) in Chitwan National Park

Bed Bahadur Khadka

Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Chitwan National Park, Chitwan, Nepal

bed.khadka@gmail.com

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Introduction

A Himalayan Vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) was found at Madi village of Chitwan district; it was weak and unable to fly and had not moved from the same place for several days. The bird was rescued from the site and taken to the headquarters of Chitwan National Park, at Kasara, on 22 March 2013.

The vulture was kept in a small aviary at the Gharial Conservation Breeding Centre (GCBC) of Chitwan National Park and was fed buffalo meat, approximately 1kg per day. The buffalo meat is provided as part of the vulture conservation breeding centre at the same location.



Figure 1: A sick Himalayan Vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) found in Chitwan, Nepal

Health condition and treatment

Upon general examination, the vulture had no obvious injuries but it was very weak, unable to fly and walked only very slowly when moved. It showed no objection or any resistance when approached by people; there was no food in its crop. The general conclusion was that the bird was suffering from starvation and this had led to its present condition. Local staff transported the bird in a large cardboard box to the conservation breeding centre.

Closer examination revealed that the vulture was anaemic (lack of haemoglobin). It had a heavy infestation of external parasites. Plumage was generally good but the pectoral (breast) muscles and femoral (thigh) muscles were very thin and lacking mass. The bird's temperature was 106 Fahrenheit and heart rate was 140/min, both considered to be normal.

Diagnosis:

An infectious disease was ruled out as a cause of the bird's poor condition and the heavy ectoparasite infestation, if not the actual cause of

illness, was considered to be limiting recovery of the bird.

Prognosis:

The prognosis was good and the vulture made steady progress during its rehabilitation.

Treatment:

Ectoparasites were treated via subcutaneous Ivermectin injection and an iron supplement was injected intramuscularly to treat anaemia. A vitamin B complex with liver extract was administered for three days to stimulate digestive processes and aid metabolism. An electrolyte supplement was also administered for three days.

Between March 22nd and April 13th the vulture was kept in rehabilitation at the Gharial Conservation Breeding Centre. It was released on the occasion of a 'wildlife week' at the centre and, prior to release, was fitted with an identification tag (VZ Yellow – see picture) on its leg. For two days after its release the vulture stayed near the breeding centre before moving away.



Figure 3: Vulture in rehabilitation at Gharial Conservation Breeding Centre



Figure 4: The vulture immediately after release

Acknowledgments

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