



VULTURE PROGRAMME MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2017

VulPro is very proud to announce our new after school programme in conjunction with Roots & Shoots educational initiative under the Jane Goodall Institute. This programme takes place once a week at VulPro in which children from the surrounding community spend 2 hours at VulPro learning about conservation, environmental respect and general responsibility towards themselves, their families, fauna and flora.

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to Maggie Hirschauer at the end of this month. Maggie joined VulPro in 2014 to undertake her 2 year Masters project with us, studying the captive breeding of Cape Vultures at the Centre. Finishing her thesis and successfully graduating, Maggie decided to stay on for another year with us where she became an integral part in all of our lives and in the running and management of VulPro. She is going to be sorely missed and we wish Maggie all the very best for her future and ongoing conservation career back in the USA.

The 1 March also welcomed our newest employee, Charne Wilhelmi; who we are excited to introduce her to you all as the CEO's assistant and who will also take over some of the day to day admin activities, educational activities, marketing, social media and fundraising.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Date	Meet with	Representing	Purpose	Project title/reference/purpose
01/03/2017	Staff	VulPro	Monthly updates and scheduling for the month	Monthly staff meeting

01/03/2017	Maggie Hirschauer, Anzelle van Wyk and Charne Wilhelmi	VulPro staff	Discussion on hand over by Maggie, scheduling field work dates and general expected duties from new staff	Handover and staff duties
01/03/2017	Sam Ralston	Birdlife SA	Wind farm development and vultures Email correspondence	Follow up on the progress of document on guidelines as well as setting up a letter of concern regarding the WF developments in particularly the REDZ zones and negative interaction with the Cape vultures
01/03/2017	Bhekinkosi Sibanda and Maggie Hirschauer	VulPro staff	Mid-project meeting to discuss power line aversion behavioural study; outline data obtained so far and assess for future monitoring	Power line aversion behavioural project
02/03/2017	Mfuneko ? Buntu Mtamo	Independent DEAT	Advice and liaison Telephonically and email	Advice and assistance with regards to injured vulture attacked by dogs. Vulture subsequently died however in discussion Kerri and I are going to see if we can assist Mfuneko with basic guidance on care for injured birds later during the year. Pictures forwarded to DEAT on request
06/03/2017	Byron Bishop	Air Traffic Services	Discussion as to the altitude vultures fly due to the safety distances aircrafts need to fly at and the danger zones between pilots and vultures	Vultures and pilots
06/03/2017	Barend Craven	Contractor	Site visit to the Nooitgedacht breeding colony and now release site. Inspecting the new release enclosure and discussions as	Nooitgedacht release enclosure

			to additional changes on the structure and requirements for safety aspects for the birds	
07/03/2017	Anton de Bruin	Sandown Ranch	Site visit into the establishment of a vulture restaurant on the property and the correct management and day to day activities around the supplementation of food for vultures	Vulture restaurant
10/03/2017	Charlotte Simpson	Private	Meeting to discuss volunteer opportunities at VulPro	Volunteer opportunities
13/03/2017	Paola Vimercati	Lion and Safari Park	Visit to learn about vulture identification and the difference between Cape and African White-backed vultures	Vulture identification
13/03/2017	Jakes Swart	Leopard Lodge	Discussion and planning for VulPro's 2017 gala dinner	Gala dinner
15/03/2017	Yonanda Martin	Organiser: Kromdraai Trail Running event	Meeting to discuss the stand and needs to showcase and promote VulPro and vulture conservation before the trail run on the 25 th .	Stand at the Kromdraai Trail Run
16/03/2017	Robert Valance	Universal Crane Hire	Discussion of quote and donation of crane services to mitigate dangerous power line structure	Municipal power line structure mitigation
23/03/2017	Rudi Kruger Kishaylin Chetty	Eskom	Molteno Dx line Del Pos Tx line	Communication regarding urgencies on both these lines for mitigation to prevent further casualties of vultures
24/03/2017	Marc Sherratt	Marc Sherratt Sustainability Architects	Meeting to discuss VulPro and Marc Sherratt Sustainability Architects collaborating on environmental projects with them supporting and assisting with our release enclosures, vulture reintroductions and any and all constructions incorporating sustainability and eco-friendly constructions.	Collaboration with Marc Sherratt Sustainability Architects

24/03/2017	Ronelle Visagie and Wim with Eskom	EWT and Curly Wee respectively and Eskom	Site visit regarding the Lappet-faced vulture electrocution at Curly Wee. Discussion and addressing the unsafe structures around the farm	Curly Wee power line electrocution investigation
25/03/2017	School student	Hangklip School project	Kate Webster was interviewed regarding her work on vultures and with VulPro	School project
25/03/2017	Ian Hamlett	Regal	Site visit and assistance with the donated cameras which Regal has sponsored to VulPro for our rehab and captive breeding monitoring	Regal sponsorship
27/03/2017	Robyn Inge-Moller and Thumi	Bester Birds	Discussion and way forward for TUT intern students to complete their practical year at VulPro, fully funded by Price Waterhouse Coopers.	TUT intern students
28/03/2017	Barend Craven and Marc Sherratt	VulPro and Sustainability Architects respectively	Site visit at Nooitgedacht to inspect the new release enclosure and to start drawing up specs for our new buildings	Nooitgedacht release enclosure

Media

Ongoing media, awareness and exposure through Facebook and Twitter, as well as other social media throughout February; with 5000 followers on Kerri Wolter's profile and 7399 on the VulPro Facebook page. We have 870 followers on Twitter and now 289 followers on Instagram.

Date	Media	Publisher	Purpose	Comment
03/03/2017	"VulPro vulture rehabilitation centre"	Edenvale Enthusiasts	Awareness and exposure	An article was placed in the local newsletter, detailing and showcasing the work we undertake to the Edenvale community.
02/03/2017	"Tracked vultures in the Eastern Cape"	Article for Bee-Eater Magazine (EC Birdlife)	Awareness and exposure	Article was produced for the magazine, highlighting the tracking movement of some of the Eastern Cape vultures fitted with tracking devices.

06/03/2017	"High possibility of vultures becoming extinct"	Colchester newsletter and magazine	Awareness and exposure	An article on the work VulPro undertakes and highlighting the sponsorship and relationship between VulPro and the Colchester Zoo
08/03/2017	"Epic stand-off between lone jackal and three species of vultures:	Lowvelder	Awareness and exposure	Article regarding the behaviour of vultures and a jackal in a natural setting, comments provided by us as leading vulture experts.
13/03/2017	"Path into the future" video	SA Weather Station	Awareness and exposure	Ongoing broadcasting of our 15-minute video entitled Path in the future showcasing and highlighting our work dealing with rehab, wild captures, tracking, tagging, threats vultures are facing and our passion in saving these misunderstood birds.
14/03/2017	"AWB vulture nesting leaves its nesting area"	NW Birding News newsletter	Awareness and exposure	VulPro is a regular feature in these newsletters and once again, our work has been showcased and highlighted with regards to our vulture tracking work and highlighting the distances vultures forage, not only covering the whole of SA but across southern Africa.
16/03/2017	"A day in the life of VulPro"	New Afrikaans TV show	Publicity	Promo for a new Afrikaans TV show, highlighting conservation work and actions and activities involved in the daily lives of conservationists.

CONSERVATION
A. DIRECT ACTIVITIES

Rehabilitation

Date	MR Ref*	Activity	Follow up	Comment
09/03/2017	01.03	Collected an injured CV from Mokopane	The bird will remain at VulPro for research, breeding and conservation purposes	The bird has a broken wing from flying into overhead power lines and will thus never fly again. He has been treated for infection, dehydration and starvation.
09/03/2017	02.03	Collected an injured CV from Lichtenberg	The bird will also remain at VulPro for research, breeding and conservation purposes	This bird also flew into overhead power lines and has an old broken wing which has already fused and thus, cannot be re-broken and pinned. She was already treated for infection, dehydration and starvation.
13/03/2017	03.03	DHL transported the CV which was collected in Burgersdorp (28.02.017) to VulPro	Monitoring for possible release	The CV was transported by DHL to VulPro from the Eastern Cape. The bird has a broken wing tip from a power line collision but, the bird still manages to fly and once the bird has picked up weight, we will move him to the larger rehab enclosure and assess his flying with a chance of releasing him back into the wild.
15/03/2017	04.03	Investigated a vulture poisoning in the Bloemhof area, NW Province	Monitoring and following up with Eskom	The poisoning turned out to be vulture electrocutions where 2 vulture carcasses were found below distribution lines. A third vulture had disappeared which was seen and found by the landowner, also dead under one of the structures. A report and details have been sent to Eskom.
16/03/2017		Released one of the rehab CVS which came in at the end of January 2017	Monitoring for re-sightings via wing tags and with the use of the tracking device	The bird was fitted with tags and a GPS tracking device for monitoring purposes. We do not have a lot of data from vultures coming in from the Limpopo Province and thus took the opportunity to learn from this released Thabazimbi CV.

17/03/2017	05.03	Collected 2 injured Cape Vultures from farm Dalkieth in Molteno district	Non-releasable and will remain in captivity for educational and breeding purposes.	Both birds electrocuted on 22kV line Power line report submitted to Eskom/EWT. Both juvenile birds and one has damaged ligament while the other has a badly burnt wing
19/03/2017	06.03	Collected an adult CV from Skeerpoort	Monitoring for release	The bird was found grounded, dehydrated and underweight. There were rashes on both wings on the underside and as this bird was previously wild captured and tagged, the tags were removed to avoid rubbing and friction to the already aggravated areas. He is now being fed up, treated with antibiotics and antibacterial cream and we hope for a full recovery.
21/03/2017	07.03	Kate Webster collected 1 injured Cape Vulture from Baviaans valley near Bedford	Non-releasable and will remain in captivity for educationa, research and captive breeding purposes.	Bird has damaged wing from colliding with Tx line. Follow up letter to Eskom/EWT regarding this line.
22/03/2017	08.03	Collected a European Hobby from Pretoria that was shot in his wing	Monitoring for release	The left wing has a slight scare which is slowly healing. We are optimistic that the bird will fly again but not in time for this year's migration.
23/03/2017	09.03	Kate Webster Collected an AWB vulture from Smithfield district in the Freestate	Monitoring for release	The bird was found very weak, dehydrated and underweight. He is being treated currently by Kate but will be transported up to VulPro, once again with the help of DHL for ongoing treatment and hopefully release with a tracking device.
24/03/2017	10.03	Collected a poisoned CV from 30 km outside Luckhoff on the gravel road to Phillipolis	Monitoring for release	The CV was collected by Ronelle Visagie of EWT. Ronelle requested the assistance of VulPro and upon examination, it was evident that the bird was exposed to some degree of poisoning and is being treated accordingly.

25/03/2017	11.03	Collected a badly injured adult AWB vulture from Schweizer Reneker	Monitoring for signs of recovery	The bird survived an electrocution but both wings are severely injured. The injuries are old with bone and tendon exposes. We are trying to save the one wing but the other will have to be amputated once the bird is stable enough to endure an operation. She is in ICU and being treated for stress, infection, dehydration, starvation and seizures.
27/03/2017	12.03	Collected an injured Cape Vulture from the farm Dalkieth in the Molteno district	Non-releasable and will remain in captivity for conservation purposes	Juvenile male with permanent wing damage due to power line interaction.

Research and monitoring

Date	Project title	Project centered at	Comment
02/03/2017 06/03/2017 08/03/2017 14/03/2017	Power line survey	Mokopane	Multiple surveys were undertaken in the Mokopane area in the Limpopo Province, close to the Mockford's vulture restaurant. Three vulture carcasses were found under power lines and a full report has been produced and sent to Eskom with our findings and the full report on our survey, showcasing the high usage of the power lines by the vultures and the need to modify the power lines to bird friendly status.
08/03/2017 09/03/2017 23/03/2017	African White-backed vulture sexing study	VulPro	Assessing the sexing of African White-backed vultures using plumage colouration and streaking. This will be Bheki's intern study which will be published next year.
15/03/2017	Vulture captures	VulPro	Managed to capture one AWB vulture at VulPro using our walk-in capture trap and took the opportunity to tag and fit a tracking device to this juvenile. As more and more AWB vultures visit and feed at our restaurant, we are keen to find out where these birds are coming from, where they were bred and where they are headed to. We are now watching his movement closely with him currently being on the board of Botswana and the NW Province of SA.

17/21/03/2017	Tree nesting vulture captures	Olifants	Visited the Olifants River Private Game Reserve where we attempted to capture tree nesting vultures with nooses again. This time around we managed to capture two young AWB vultures and fit them with tags and tracking devices. We are absolutely thrilled with our somewhat success and have another 8 tracking devices to fit to these vultures in Olifants.
24/03/2017 30/03/2017	Vulture capture	VulPro	<p>Undertook a quick vulture capture as part of the calcium study and managed to capture 17 Cape Vultures but only processed 2 as part of the calcium study.</p> <p>Undertook a second quick vulture capture as part of the calcium study and managed to capture 21 CVs and 1 juvenile AWB vulture. We fitted the AWB vulture with a tracking device, our second one for VulPro and processed another 5 CVs but let the rest go without processing due to the temperature and the focus being the calcium and the tracking device study.</p>
March 2017	Calcium study	VulPro	We are also still assessing Cape Vulture calcium levels (in egg shells and various stages of chick development) across various facilities and backgrounds in collaboration with the University of Pretoria's faculty of vet sciences. Nine wild CVs were x-rayed to compare the captive bred vulture bone densities.
March 2017	Research publications	VulPro	<p>Our publication entitled 'High occurrence of extra-pair partnerships and homosexuality in a captive Cape Vulture <i>Gyps coprotheres</i>' has been accepted in <i>Ostrich</i> for publication.</p> <p>Two manuscripts have been submitted and are awaiting decisions: Short Note in <i>Bird Study</i>: Immature Cape Vulture breaks species range record. Short Note in <i>Ostrich</i>: Sexual dimorphism and plumage characteristics of young Cape Vultures.</p>
March 2017	Power line aversion study	VulPro	Power-line aversion behavior programme continued and is being monitored via GoPro cameras and direct observations every afternoon and morning. The project is concluding this month, as it seems to be ineffective to deter perching.
March 2017	Re-sighting database	Southern Africa	Ongoing updating of the re-sighting database.

March 2017	Vulture tracking	Southern Africa	Ongoing monitoring of all vultures still with tracking devices.
March 2017	Vulture restaurant database	Southern Africa	Continued to update the vulture restaurant database

Education & Training

Date	Activity	Project title	Project centered at	Comment
01/03/2017	Educational programme	After school Roots & Shoots educational programme	VulPro	A group of 29 children attended the first day of our 2017 after school programme at VulPro. It was well attended and enjoyed by the kids, the community and the project leaders. Each child has a workbook which they now work through each week for the next 25 weeks.
04/03/2017	Educational tour	Educational and awareness talk	VulPro	A large group of residents (40 guests) from the eco housing estate Xanadu, visited VulPro, attended and talk and toured around the Centre. They also kindly gave a large donation and have offered their ongoing support towards our work.
04/03/2017	Presentation	Educational	Queenstown	A presentation was given to the North E Cape VLV Congress where 60 guests attended the talk. Brochures and VulPro booklets were handed out.
08/03/2017 15/03/2017 22/03/2017	Educational programme	After school Roots & Shoots educational programme	VulPro	Ongoing weekly environmental after school programme. Ongoing group of 29 children.
23/03/2017	Educational tour	Education and awareness	VulPro	A small group of 8 guests visited the Centre, learnt about the importance of vultures to the ecosystem and the work we undertake to protect and save vultures.
25/03/2017	Educational display	Educational and awareness	Danielsrus in Kromdraai	VulPro had a stand at the first trail running event in Kromdraai. 40 Visitors visited the stand and learnt about vultures, their importance and the work VulPro undertakes. It was a very small event with a low turnout due to lack of advertising and exposure. However, it was valuable as this is a vulture hotspot area with the vultures bathing and regularly visiting the event

				site. Brochures, vulture badges, educational interactive sheets and biodiversity booklets were handed out.
13/03/2017	Educational tour	Educational and awareness	VulPro	One local guest toured the Centre and learnt about the work we undertake to save vultures.

Hide booking:

- 12/03/2017 Divan (4 people)
- 18/03/2017 Albert Froneman (2 people)
- 19/03/2017 Bertie Baard (4 people)

Administration and Pending

- Collection of donated carcasses
- Maintenance of VulPro vehicles
- Ongoing treatment and care of vultures and birds of prey at VulPro.
- Fundraising
- Report writing
- Press release writing
- Administration
- Vulture restaurant feeding at the Vulture Centre
- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter updates
- Maintenance
- Management of volunteers and students
- Management of the vulture hide and bookings
- Management of HR issues
- Management of VulPro as a whole
- Management and co-ordination of vulture research
- Maintain updated captive breeding and rehabilitation records
- Continual updates to website, including range maps of tracked birds, sponsor logos, and publications.
- Continue to draft VulPro's Vulture Rehabilitation Manual manuscript.
- Construction of our release enclosure at the Nooitgedacht breeding colony