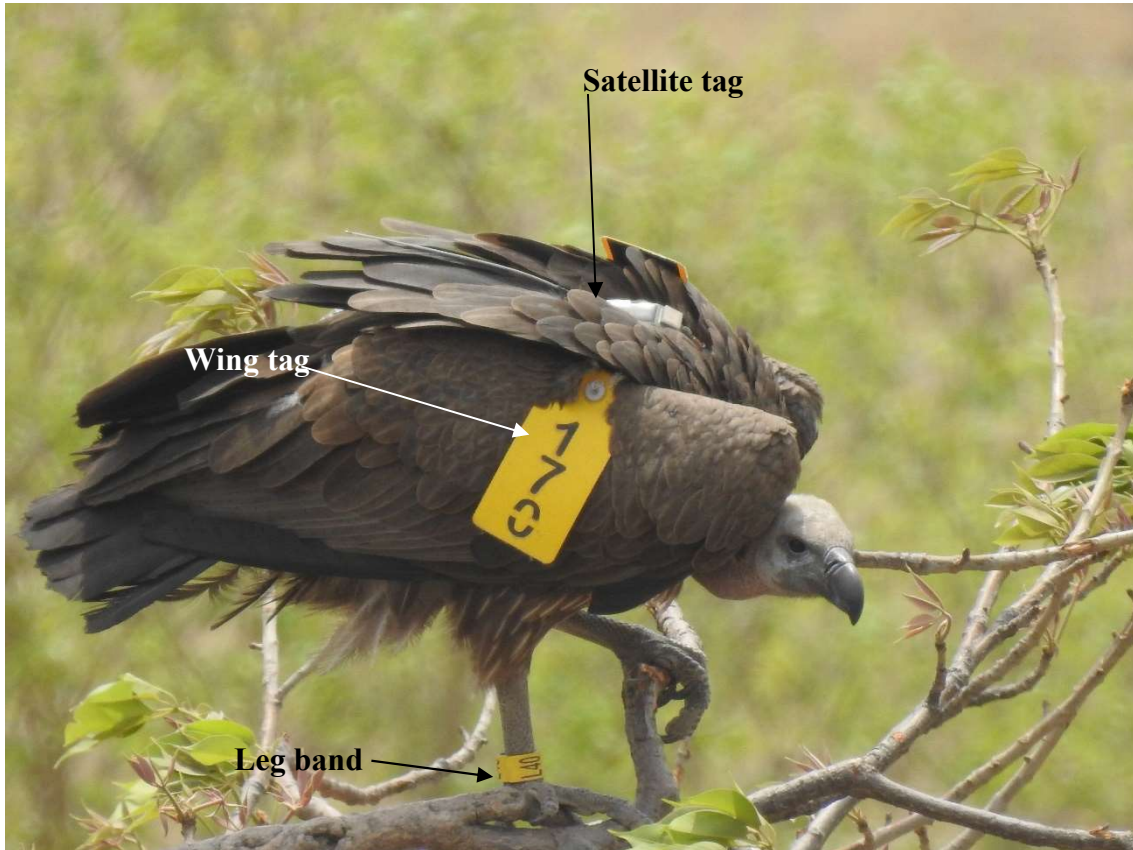


**Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, Pinjore, Haryana**

**Annual Report**

**1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021**



A reintroduced Oriental White-backed vulture in the wild



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**An Oriental White-backed vulture at the centre**

## 1. Report of the Officer-in-charge

The Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre, Pinjore, located at Jodhpur village on the edge of the Bir Shikargaha Wildlife Sanctuary is a collaborative project of the Forest and Wildlife Department, Haryana and Bombay Natural History Society. The centre was established to save the three Critically Endangered Gyps species of vultures viz. Oriental White-backed vulture, *Gyps bengalensis*, Long-billed vulture, *Gyps indicus* and Slender-billed vulture, *Gyps tenuirostris*, from looming extinction. The main objective of the centre is to house and breed 25 pairs of each of the three species and release 100 pairs of each of the species, within ten years from the beginning of the release programme. The release programme was initiated during 2015-16.

The centre has a Governing Council which is chaired by the Addl. Chief Secretary, Department of Forests and Wildlife, Government of Haryana. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden, Haryana is the Member Secretary.

### a. Vultures at the centre

The highest number of vultures anywhere in the world were housed at the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre. There were 376 vultures including the nestlings of this year (2020-21) which have successfully hatched and fledged.

There were 130 Oriental White-backed vultures (OWBV), 195 Long-billed vultures (LBV) and 51 Slender-billed vultures (SBV) housed at the centre.



### b. Breeding at the centre

Successful breeding at VCBC Pinjore was recorded for the first time in 2008 and systematic breeding by artificial incubation was taken up in 2010, double clutching in 2011 and chick swapping in 2014 as a result of which VCBC,

Pinjore have hatched and fledged over 300 vulture nestlings between 2010 to 2019.

The breeding season of vultures commenced from the month of September, just as it would in the wild. The established pairs in the colony aviaries were observed defending their nest ledges and remain perched together most of the time. During the year 2020-21, all the three species attempted breeding at the centre.

However, in the year 2020, due to fund shortage, artificial incubation could not be carried out and hence no double clutching could be stimulated. Breeding on nests continued and only the first clutch hatched and fledged as a result of which only 15 chicks fledged this year unlike previous years when number of chicks fledged was between 35-49. They were 7 LBV, 5 OWBV and 3 SBV. However, till 31 March 2021, a total of 13 nestlings had hatched.

### **c. The team**

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Haryana was the Project Leader of the Programme. Dr. Vibhu Prakash was the Project Manager and was assisted by Ms. Nikita Prakash, Scientist 'C', Dr. Debasish Saikia Veterinarian, Mr. Lalit Sharma, Technical assistant, Mr. Niranjana Dalei, Administrative Officer, Mr. Balakram Sharma, Administrative Assistant, Ms. Palak Thakur, Accounts Assistant, and Mr. Jaikishan Sharma, Supervisor. There were six vulture keepers and one driver cum vulture keeper to assist in the smooth functioning of the centre.

This report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

**Vibhu Prakash, Ph.D.**

**Officer-in-charge**

**Vulture Programme**



## **2. History of the Rescue Centre**

The Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre is a joint project of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Haryana Forest Department. It is a collaborative initiative of a government agency and a Non-Governmental Organisation, to save the three species of vultures, the White-backed, Long-billed and Slender-billed, from looming extinction.

The VCBC, earlier known as Vulture Care Centre, was established in September 2001 with the UK Government grant of the Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species, to investigate the dramatic declines in India's *Gyps* species of vultures. The centre was inaugurated in the year 2003 by the British Minister for Nature, Mr. Elliot Morley.

Subsequent to the release of the South Asia Vulture Recovery Plan in February 2004, the centre was renamed Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) as conservation breeding became the main objective of the centre.

**The centre was recognised as a rescue centre for vultures in the year 2007 by the Central Zoo Authority.**

The centre is situated at the base of the Shivalik ranges of Himalayan foothills. It lies on the outskirts of the Bir Shikargaha Wildlife Sanctuary, 8 km from Pinjore, off the Chandigarh-Shimla highway. It spreads over 5 acres of Haryana Forest Department's land in village Jodhpur. The centre is ideally located away from human habitations, and yet is easily accessible from the main city so the day-to-day requirements of the centre can be easily organised.

### **3. Vision**

To become a living example of saving critically endangered bird species from extinction with ex-situ conservation programme.



## **4. Mission**

To release 100 pairs each, of the three species of vultures, in the next fifteen years, to establish and secure viable wild populations of resident *Gyps*, in an environment free of diclofenac and other poisons.

### **5. Objectives**

To establish a founder population of 25 pairs of each of the three endangered vulture species viz. Oriental White-backed vulture, Long-billed vulture and Slender-billed vulture.



To produce a population of at least 200 birds of each of the three species, to be reintroduced in the wild.

To rescue injured wild resident *Gyps* vultures and include them in the ongoing conservation breeding programme after recovery.

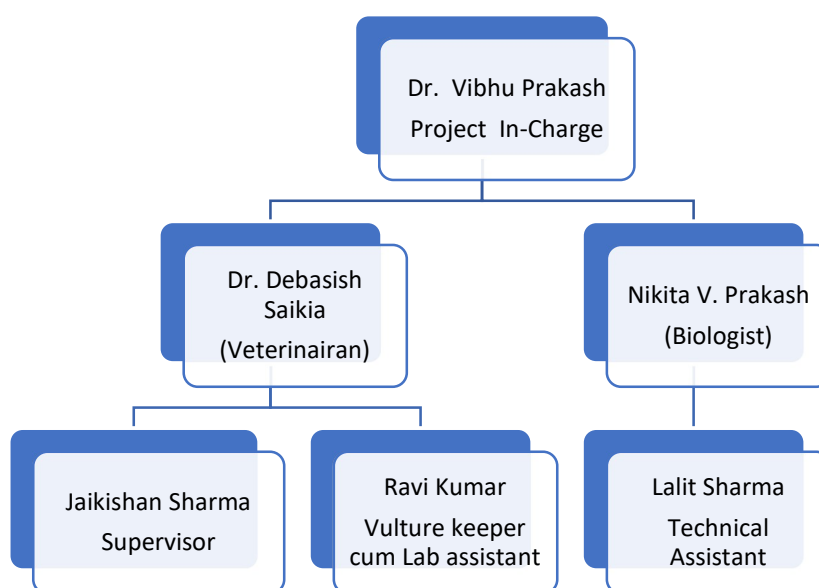
## 6. About us

S.No.	Particulars	Information
<b>Basic Information about the Rescue Centre</b>		
1	Name of the Rescue Centre	<b>Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre</b>
2	Year of Establishment	<b>2007</b>
3	Address of the Rescue Centre	<b>B-3, Forest Complex, Pinjore 134102, Haryana</b>
4	State	<b>Haryana</b>
5	Telephone Number	<b>+91 9416044924</b>
6	Fax Number	<b>NA</b>
7	E-mail address	<b>v.mathur@bnhs.org</b>
8	Website	<b>www.bnhs.org</b>
9	Distance from nearest	Airport: approx. 30km from Chandigarh International Airport
		Railway Station: 15km from Kalka Railway Station
		Bus Stand: 10km from Pinjore Bus Stand
10	Recognition Valid up to (Date)	<b>19 August 2021</b>
11	Area (in Hectares)	<b>2.0234282</b>
<b>Management Personnel of the Rescue Centre</b>		
12	Name with designation of the Officer in-charge	<b>Vibhu Prakash, Ph. D. Principal Scientist/Deputy Director</b>
	Name of the Veterinary Officer	<b>Dr. Debasish Saikia, B. V. Sc.</b>
	Name of the Curator	<b>Nikita V. Prakash</b>
	Name of the Biologist	<b>Nikita V. Prakash</b>
	Name of the Compounder/ Lab Assistant	<b>Ravi Kumar and Manohar Lal</b>
<b>Owner / Operator of the Rescue Centre</b>		

S.No.	Particulars	Information
13	*Name of the Operator	Chief Wildlife Warden, Haryana
14	Address of the Operator	Haryana Forest Department, C-18, Van Bhavan, Sector 6, Panchkula 134109, Haryana
15	Contact details/Phone number of Operator	0172-2561224
16	E-mail address of Operator	pccfwlhry@gmail.com



## 7. Organizational Chart of the Rescue Centre





**8. Human Resources deployment for management of Rescue Centre (Officer in-charge to Animal Keeper - Sanctioned posts, in-position and vacant posts)  
Human Resources of the Rescue Centre\***

Sl. No.	Designation	Number of Sanctioned Posts	Names of the incumbent
1.	Officer in-charge	1	Vibhu Prakash
2.	Veterinarian	1	Debasish Saikia
3.	Biologist	1	Nikita V. Prakash
4.	Technical Assistant	1	Lalit Kumar
5.	Supervisor	1	Jaikishan Sharma
6.	Vulture Attendants	6	Tek Singh, Ravi Kumar, Devidutt Sharma, Manohar Lal, Sukhdev, Ved Prakash
7.	Driver cum vulture attendant	1	Rajnish Kumar
8.	Night watchman	1	Prakash Chand

\*Please give above mentioned information in respect of all Rescue Centre personnel, from the Officer in-charge up to the Animal Keeper.

**9. Capacity Building of Rescue Centre personnel**

Sl. No.	Name and designation of the Rescue Centre personnel	Subject matter of Training	Period of Training	Name of the Institution where the training attended
1	None	None	None	None

**10. Rescue Centre Advisory Committee**

**a. Date of constitution:** 2nd May 2006

**Members:** The following are the members of the Governing Council

- I. Addl. Chief Secretary, Health and Family welfare, Govt. of Haryana, Chandigarh
- II. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Van Bhawan, Plot no. C-18, Sector 6, Panchkula
- III. Addl. Director General (Wildlife), Govt. of India, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, New Delhi.
- IV. The Member Secretary, MoEF&CC, Central Zoo Authority, B-1 Wing, 6th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003.
- V. The Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Chandrabani, Dehradun.
- VI. Drug Controlling Authority, SCO 94, Sector 5, Panchkula.
- VII. Director, Animal Husbandry, Pasu Dhan Bhawan, Ways no. 9-12, Sector 2, Panchkula.

VIII. Director, Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai.

IX. Vice Chancellor, Lala Lajpat Rai University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Hisar, Haryana.

X. Dr. Vibhu Prakash, Principal Scientist & Dy. Director, BNHS, Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre, B-3, Forest Complex, Pinjore, Haryana.

**b. Dates on which Meetings held during the year:** 12<sup>th</sup> Governing Council meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### **11. Health Advisory Committee of the Rescue Centre**

**a. Date of constitution:** Not formally constituted but since inception, 2004, the following committee supervises the health of birds

**b. Members:** Centre in-charge, Centre Veterinarian, Chief Veterinary Officer of Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

**c. Dates on which Meetings held during the year:** No health check could be conducted in 2020 due to Covid restrictions

### **12. Statement of income and expenditure of the Rescue Centre**

#### **Expense statement of Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre, Pinjore, Haryana, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

Most of the funding for the centre comes through the Recovery Plan of Endangered Species through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of MoEF&CC. For the financial year 2019-20, the Annual Plan of Operation submitted was of Rs. 6.75 crore but only 1.75 crore were sanctioned. The Centre could receive only Rs. 1.79 crore this year (2020-2021) out of which 1.07 crore were from CSS scheme and Rs. 0.72 crore from Haryana Forest Department from the State Government funds. The total curtailed expenditure was Rs. 2.87 Crore. BNHS with great difficulty had to raise 1.06 crore from other funding agency i.e RSPB of U.K.

Hence because of the paucity and delay in release of funds, most of the objectives for the APO could not be achieved.

### 13. Daily food Schedule of animals

Sl. No.	Species	Feed item	Quantity/vulture		Day of fasting
			Winter	Summer	
1.	Oriental White-backed vulture	Goat meat	4kg	4kg	Fed twice a week on Mondays and Fridays
2.	Long-billed vulture	Goat meat	4kg	4kg	Fed twice a week on Monday and Friday
3.	Slender-billed vulture	Goat meat	4kg	4kg	Fed twice a week on Monday and Friday

**Twice a week provision of Food for Vultures at VCBC, Pinjore, Haryana**



#### 14. Vaccination Schedule of animals

Sl. No.	Species	Disease vaccinated for	Name of the Vaccine & dosage/ quantity used	Periodicity	Remarks
	-	-	-	-	<b>No vaccination has been done till now although the centre would like to vaccinate its birds against avian influenza but permission to import the vaccines could not be obtained.</b>

#### 15. De-worming Schedule of animals

Sl. No.	Species	Drug used	Month
1.	<b>Oriental White-backed vulture</b>	<b>No de-worming is done but endoparasite load is monitored by routine faecal sample analysis. This is because the birds have to be reintroduced in the wild.</b>	<b>NA</b>
2.	<b>Long-billed vulture</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>NA</b>
3.	<b>Slender-billed vulture</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>NA</b>

## 16. Disinfection Schedule

Sl. No.	Species	Type of enclosure	Disinfectant used and method	Frequency of disinfection
1.	Oriental White-backed vulture	Incubator and brooder room, Nursery, holding, colony aviaries	Lime and F10	Once in 15 days
2.	Long-billed vulture	Incubator and brooder room, Nursery, holding, colony aviaries	Lime and F10	Once in 15 days
3.	Slender-billed vulture	Incubator and brooder room, Nursery, holding, colony aviaries	Lime and F10	Once in 15 days



Scrubbing and disinfecting walls with lime



F10, a strong and safe disinfectant



Potable municipal water supply for drinking



Perches are wound and disinfected every month

**17. Health Check-up of employees for zoonotic diseases**

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Date of Health Check up	Findings of Health Check up
1.	Mr. Jaikishan Sharma	Supervisor	Due to Corona pandemic no hospital visits were permitted. So, no health check could be conducted. There was also acute shortage of funding.	NA
2.	Tek Singh	Vulture Attendant	--ditto-----	ditto
3.	Ravi Kumar	Vulture Attendant	--ditto-----	ditto
4.	Manohar Lal	Vulture Attendant	--ditto-----	ditto

5.	Devidutt Sharma	Vulture Attendant	--ditto-----	ditto
6.	Sukhdev	Vulture Attendant	--ditto-----	ditto
7.	Ved Prakash	Vulture Attendant	--ditto-----	ditto

## 18. Development works carried out in the Rescue Centre during the year

### Inauguration of the newly constructed 6<sup>th</sup> colony aviary by Forest Minister

The Haryana Forest Development Corporation (HFDC) completed the construction of 6<sup>th</sup> colony aviary and 15



colony aviary and 15 vultures of 2 species the Oriental White-backed and Long-billeds were released in the aviary on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 by honorable Forest Minister Mr. Kanwar Pal. The aviary is of dimensions 100x40x20' and can house 30-35 birds.

## 19. Important events and happenings

### Reintroduction Programme of vultures

#### a. Release of 8 critically endangered Oriental White-backed vultures in the wild on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020

The most awaited moment of Vulture Programme arrived on 8th October 2020 when 8 critically endangered Oriental White-backed vultures were released, for the first time in India, from the pre-release aviary of Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre by honourable Mr. Kanwar Pal, Cabinet Minister of Haryana, Forest & Wildlife Department, in the presence of Dr. Mrs. Amarinder Kaur, IFS, PCCF, (HOFF), Mr. Alok Verma, IFS, Chief Wildlife Warden and several Senior Forest officials of Haryana Forest Department. The vultures were released by lifting the gate of the aviary by rolling the pulley located in a hide 50m away from the aviary.

All the 8 vultures were deployed with transmitters on their backs and orange coloured wing tags on both the wings. Four of the vultures were deployed with Satellite Transmitters (PTTs) and four with GSM tags which work on mobile phone technology. Six vultures were 7-8 years old and captive hatched while 2 were adults and rescued from the wild. The 2 rescued wild

caught adults will act as guide birds to the captive bred birds as they were experienced and knew the tricks of survival in the wild in terms of locating food and predator avoidance. All the released vultures could fly well but are still around 50 km from the centre. One vulture died of electrocution and two got injured and were brought back to the centre and were released back after they got became healthy.

### **b. Monitoring habitat in a radius of 100 km from pre-release aviary to ensure the success of the release programme**

The vultures are known to go over 100 km in a day in search for food. It is imperative to ensure



that at least the area in a radius of 100 km is safe for vultures; it has enough food, habitat and no other problems for its survival. The habitat evaluation was carried out during 2019-20, before the birds were released in the wild.

The following parameters were monitored:

1. Population of free ranging Gyps vultures in the area
2. Prevalence of veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
3. Food availability
4. Habitat availability
5. Any other threat to vultures

Before releasing the Vultures in October 2020 in the wild, the undercover pharmacy survey carried out in 2019-20 had revealed that the vulture safe drug meloxicam was the most popular drug for cattle treatment as 46.7% (n=80) pharmacies offered this drug. The prevalence of the vulture toxic drug, diclofenac was very low and only 5.6% (n=80) pharmacies sold this drug. All these were human formulations of 3 mL ampoules or as tablets. There was a small population of OWBV in the area which was revealed by the road transect surveys. Mostly Egyptian Vultures were counted at carcass dumps. Over 200 birds were counted in October 2020. Good number of OWBV were attracted to the pre-release aviary regularly, a maximum of 69 OWBV were recorded in July 2019. The regular monitoring of carcass dumps revealed good food availability to vultures.

**However due to COVID restriction and shortage of funds, no habitat monitoring could be carried out during 2020-21.**



### c. Release of the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India 2020-2025

The centre played a major role in drafting the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India



2020-2025. The action plan was released by the Union Minister of State, MoEF&CC, Mr. Babul Supriyo on 9th November 2020 in the presence of Dr. Sanjay Kumar, IFS, Director General of Forests & Spl. Secy, MoEF&CC, Mr. Soumitra Dasgupta, IFS, Additional Director General of Forests

(Wildlife), MoEF&CC, Mr. S. P. Yadav, IFS, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority, Mr. Amit Kumar, IFS, Inspector General of Forest, Mr. Rakesh Kumar Jagenia, IFS, Deputy Inspector General of Forest (Wildlife).

Vibhu Prakash and Nikita Prakash attended the function from BNHS. The Action Plan is entirely drafted by BNHS. The Action Plan is for 5 years and it identifies the Veterinary NSAIDS as the main cause of crash in Vulture Population in the country. It gives the road map of prevention of poisoning of the principal food of vultures, the cattle carcasses, and advocates automatic ban on an NSAID if found toxic to vultures. It recommends safety testing of all the available veterinary NSAIDS of unknown toxicity.

### 20. Seasonal special arrangements for upkeep of animals

I. Once again high-quality shade cloth was laid on top of all aviaries to provide additional



shade. This cloth brings down the temperature by 5°C.

II. Instead of only 2 water troughs filled in winter months, all 4 water troughs were filled during peak summer months of May, June, July and August to keep the birds cool and hydrated.

III. New nest cots, perches, stumps, sand are provided

in all aviaries before the onset of breeding season for successful breeding.

## 21. Research work carried out and publications

### Awareness programmes for vulture conservation

Due to the Covid-related restrictions, several awareness meetings, to raise vulture conservation awareness, were mainly held virtually. A total of 11 webinars were conducted during the period for audiences ranging from Forest Officials to Veterinarians to College students.

Forest Department is the custodian of wildlife and is responsible for the implementation of Wildlife Protection Act 1972. The centre gave extensive information on vulture conservation to various sources like MoEF&CC, CZA, Forest Departments of Madhya Pradesh, Kundal Forest Academy, Maharashtra, State Forest Academy, Sunder Nagar, Himachal Pradesh and Veterinary Officers of Bihar Forest Department. The trainee officers were from various states and it was possible to create awareness among large number of officers.

Prestigious organisations like Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhubaneshwar, Odisha, Deccan Birders, Hyderabad, Telangana gave vulture conservation a wider exposure. Wildlife week was utilised to sensitise students of Lady Doak, Madurai, PGDAV college, Delhi University, and Zoology Department of Goa University.

The awareness programmes conducted from April 2020 to March 2021 are summarized below:

S. No.	Date	Mode	Organiser	Delivered by
1	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Virtual	Central Zoo Authority	Vibhu Prakash
2	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020	Virtual	MoEF&CC Wildlife Week celebration	Vibhu Prakash
3	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Virtual	Madhya Pradesh State Forest Department	Vibhu Prakash
4	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Virtual	Regional Museum of natural History, Bhubaneshwar	Vibhu Prakash
5	9 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Virtual	Wildlife week, Department of Zoology, Lady Doak	Nikita

			College, Madurai, TN	
6	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Virtual	PGDAV College, University of Delhi	Vibhu Prakash
7	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Virtual	Kundal Forest Academy, Maharashtra	Nikita
8	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Virtual	Deccan birders, Hyderabad, Telangna	Vibhu Prakash
9	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021	Virtual	Goa University, Dept. of Zoology	Vibhu Prakash
10	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Physical	27 Range Forest Officers, Sunder nagar, Himachal FD	Nikita
11	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Physical	Training course for Veterinarians of Bihar Forest Department by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun	Vibhu Prakash

## 22. Rescue and Rehabilitation of wild animals

Sl. No.	Date of Rescue	Species with number of animals rescued with their sex (M: F: U: T)	Received from	Date of Submission of Report to the CWLW / CZA	Action taken	
	<b>None</b>				<b>None</b>	
	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>

## 23. Annual Inventory of animals

Form – II

[See Rule 11(1)]

Part – A

### Inventory Report for the Year: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020-31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

S. No.	Animal Name	Scientific name	Opening Stock as on				Births			Acquisition			Disposal			Death			Closing Stock as on				
			M	F	U	T	M	F	U	M	F	U	M	F	U	M	F	U	M	F	U	T	
1.	Long-billed vultures	Gyps indicus	21	23	141	185	0	0	10*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	23	151	195
2.	Oriental White-backed vultures	Gyps bengalensis	13	14	97	124	0	0	14*	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	9	10	111	130
3.	Slender-billed vultures	Gyps tenuirostris	7	7	31	45	0	0	6*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	37	51
	<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>376</b>	

#### \*Animals under Schedule I and Schedule II of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

Where

10\* 4 nestlings of April 2020 + 6 nestlings of March 2021

14\* 9 nestlings of April 2020 + 5 nestlings of March 2021

06\* 04 nestlings of April 2020 + 02 nestlings of March 2021

**Total 30\* 17 nestlings of April 2020 + 13 nestlings of March 2021**

## 24. Mortality of animals

Sl.No.	Animal Name (with individual identification mark, if any)	Scientific Name	Sex	Date of Death	Reason of Death as per the Post-mortem findings
1.	<b>No mortality</b>				

## 25. Compliance with conditions stipulated by the Central Zoo Authority

Sr. No	Norm No. under RZR, 2009	Condition stipulated	Time Period to comply	Since when pending	Status with regard to compliance of the conditions
1.	10.5(2)	Water sample to be tested	One month		The vultures are given potable municipal water supply for drinking.
2.	10.5(5)	Perches and shelves should be cleaned and disinfected regularly	Regular basis	Not pending as they are cleaned once every 15 days.	Done
3.	10.9(3)	Acquisition of rescued birds	Immediately as and when rescued	Not pending	No bird was rescued during the year
4.	10.5(3)	Shifting of birds from one centre to other	At the earliest	Not pending	No bird was shifted from one centre to other.