



## India to Release Vultures

In a first, eight captive-reared critically endangered white-backed vultures will be released with tracking devices.

- The Vultures were bred in the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre and will be released in the Bir Shikargaha sanctuary where the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is working to declare it as vulture safe zone, which extends transboundary into Himachal Pradesh.
- If there is no toxicity-related death of these eight birds in two years, then 20-25 birds will be released every year.
- In the first event of its kind in South Asia, the government of Nepal and national and international conservation organizations released critically endangered white-backed vultures in the wild on November 2017.
- The Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre is on the edge of the Bir Shikargaha Wildlife Sanctuary.
- It was set up in 2001 and is a joint project of Haryana and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) to investigate the massive decline of three critically endangered Gyps species of vultures in India.
- India is home to nine species of vultures. Three of these species, the white-backed, Long-billed and slender-billed vultures, underwent catastrophic population declines of greater than 90 percent in the mid-1990s. The birds are now listed as critically endangered.
- The reason for bringing the vultures to the brink of extinction in South Asia mainly to the extensive use of diclofenac in treating cattle. Vultures that consumed the carcass of animals treated with diclofenac died with symptoms of kidney failure. The Indian government banned its veterinary use in 2006.

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