



Raptor Species under Threat

Why in News

According to recent research, **around 30% of the 557 raptor species** around the world **are threatened by extinction** to some degree.

- It is an analysis by the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) and **BirdLife International** (a global partnership of conservation organisations (NGOs)).

Key Points

▪ Raptor Species:

- **About:** A raptor is a **bird of prey**. A bird of prey is a **carnivore (meat eater)** that kills and eats mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, rodents as well as other birds.
 - All raptors have a hooked beak, strong feet with sharp talons, keen eyesight, and a carnivorous diet.
- **Significance:**
 - Raptors prey on a wide range of vertebrates and thus, **facilitate long-distance seed dispersal**. This indirectly increases seed production and **pest control**.
 - Birds of prey are **predators at the top of the food chain**; because threats like pesticides, habitat loss, and climate change have the most dramatic impact on top predators, these are referred to as **indicator species**.
- **Population:** Indonesia has the most raptor species, followed by Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.
- **Examples:** Owls, [vultures](#), hawks, falcons, [eagles](#), kites, buteos, accipiters, harriers, and osprey.

▪ Cause of Threat:

- **Use of Diclofenac:** Some **vulture populations** have declined by over 95% in Asian countries **such as India** because of the widespread use of **diclofenac**.
 - Diclofenac is a **non-steroidal anti-inflammatory** drug.
- **Deforestation:** The population of **Philippine eagles**, the largest variety of eagles in the world, decreased rapidly in the last decades due to extensive deforestation.
 - The Philippine Eagle is **Critically Endangered** under IUCN Red List.
- **Shooting and Poisoning:** In **Africa**, **vulture populations** have decreased by an average of 95% in rural areas over the last 30 years as the result of shooting and poisoning through feeding on carcasses of livestock treated with diclofenac.
- **Habitat Loss and Degradation:** The **Annobon scops-owl**, restricted to Annobon Island off West Africa, was recently classified as **'critically endangered'** under the IUCN Red List because of rapid habitat loss and degradation.

▪ Conservation Efforts:

- **Raptors MoU (Global):** The Memorandum of Understanding on the **Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia** is also known as Raptors MoU.
 - It is an agreement under [Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals \(CMS\)](#). **CMS or Bonn Convention** provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.
 - It is **not legally binding**.
- **India's Conservation Efforts:**
 - **India is a signatory to Raptors MoU.**
 - For the conservation of vultures, India has launched a [Vulture Action Plan 2020-25](#).
 - India is also a part of the [SAVE \(Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction\)](#) consortium.
 - The **Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre in Pinjore (Haryana)** is the world's largest facility within the state's Bir Shikargah Wildlife Sanctuary for the breeding and conservation of Indian vulture species.

Source: DTE

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