



# Vulture Census

## Why in News?

The vulture census began on **17<sup>th</sup> February, 2025**, to evaluate their **population and status** in Madhya Pradesh.

## Key Points

- **About:**
  - According to official information, the winter vulture census was conducted on 17, 18 and 19 February and the summer vulture census will be conducted on 29 April 2025.
  - The **vulture census** is conducted **twice a year** in **two phases**.
  - As per official information, the **winter census** was held on **17-19 February, 2025**, while the **summer census** is scheduled from **29<sup>th</sup> April, 2025**.
- **Training Programs:**
  - **A one-day training programme** was organised by **11 master trainers** for **2024-25**.
- **Partner:**
  - More than **900 forest officers-staff, vulture experts** and **ornithologists** participated in the training.
- **Winter vulture count:**
  - The **three-day winter vulture count** has started at [Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary \(GSWLS\)](#) in **Mandsaur district**.
- According to the **state forest department**, a total of **12,981 vultures** were found in the state.
- **Historical perspective:**
  - The vulture census in Madhya Pradesh was conducted for the **first time in 2016**, when there were 6,999 vultures in the state.
  - After this, calculations have also been done for the years **2018, 2019, 2021, 2024** and **2025**.

## Vultures

- **About**
  - Vultures play an important role in the **ecosystem** because they eat dead organisms.
  - These act as **natural scavengers**.
  - They mainly live in [tropical and subtropical regions](#).
  - India is home **to nine species of vultures** such as **Oriental White-backed, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Himalayan, Red-headed, Egyptian, Bearded, Cinereous and Eurasian Griffon**.
  - Vultures **lay eggs only once a year** and this process takes place on rocks or tall trees. The average lifespan of a vulture is **15 to 30 years**.
- **Decrease in numbers**
  - The main reason for the decline in their numbers was the widespread use of the painkiller [diclofenac](#) in animal treatments in the late 1990s and early 2000s.
  - This resulted in populations decreasing by more than 97% in some areas, causing an ecological crisis.

## Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary

- Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary is located in northwestern Madhya Pradesh (**Mandsaur and Neemuch districts**) near the border with Rajasthan.
- It was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1974 .
- The **Chambal River** flows through the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary and divides it into two parts.
- **Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary is an important natural habitat** for vultures . The region's biodiversity, towering cliffs, and abundant food supply create a perfect habitat for vultures.

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