

## Press Release

Government of Tamil Nadu has constituted a State Level Committee to take comprehensive measures for Vulture Conservation in the State. There is a need to prioritize conservation of vultures to prevent the extinction of these iconic birds. Nine species of vultures are recorded from India. Oriental White-backed Vulture, Long-billed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, Eurasian Griffon, Red-headed Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Bearded Vulture and Cinereous Vulture. In four species of vultures viz. oriental white-backed vulture, long-billed vulture, red-headed vulture and Egyptian Vulture are found in Tamil Nadu.

The vulture population in India has been declining due to several reasons mainly due to adverse impact of certain veterinary drugs used for cattle treatment. In order to provide a fillip to the vulture conservation in the State of Tamil Nadu, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forest Department has issued a Government Order on 19.10.2022 constituting a 10 Member State Level Vulture Conservation Committee headed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden. The Committee includes the Director of Animal Husbandry Department and the Director of Drug Controller Food Safety and Drug Administration Department.

The Committee will also have experts from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore and Non-Governmental Organizations(NGOs) working in the field of vulture conservation. The Committee will take steps for Monitoring, conservation and recovery of existing vulture sites in Tamil Nadu and Mapping of vulture population across the State of Tamil Nadu for creating vulture safe zones. The Committee will work to eliminate the use of toxic veterinary drugs which are the main reason for mortality of vultures. Setting up vulture care rescue rehabilitation and breeding centres and bringing synergy between various departments for vulture conservation, will also be an important area of the Committee's work.

The Role and responsibility of the State Level Committee will be as below:

- i. Preparation of the Tamil Nadu Action Plan for Vulture Conservation (TNAPVC)
- ii. Prevention of poisoning of cattle carcasses, the principal food of vultures.
- iii. Scientific management of carcass dumps and carrying out sample analysis of cattle carcass.
- iv. Management of wild animal carcasses in protected and non-protected areas.

- v. Establishment of co-ordinated, well-established and efficient regulatory mechanism for ban on drugs found toxic to vultures.
- vi. Set up vulture conservation breeding centres.
- vii. Setting up Vulture Rescue Centres to cater to injured and sick vultures.
- viii. Participating in the nation-wide vulture census. Identifying locations of vultures, developing capacity to work on Vulture census periodically.
- ix. Regular monitoring of vulture population across the State of Tamil Nadu.
- x. Enhancing vulture safe zone network by creating vulture safe zones in Tamil Nadu
- xi. Enhance public awareness about the need to conserve vulture species through educational initiatives in schools and colleges, field visits, workshops, seminars and media including social media etc.

The Tenure of the Committee will be for two years.

This initiative by the Government of Tamil Nadu will pave the way for creation of an effective framework for vulture conservation in the State.

Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department.

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