



THE CAPE VULTURES (CAPE GRIFFON)

By Gift Munsaka

Report 1 of 3



Report 1

THE PAST:

The Cape Vulture also known as the Cape Griffon and Kolbes vulture, is an Old World Vulture in the family Accipitidae. It is endemic to Southern Africa and mainly in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana and the northern part of Namibia. It nests on the cliffs and lays one egg per year. They have a potential lifespan of over 30 years of age. Their wings can spread up to 2.6 metres, it is the second largest in the VULTURE family coming after the lappet-faced vulture. Cape vultures are monogamous and they often feed in larger groups and are social breeders. Cape griffon experienced a significant population decline due to the various factors including poisoning, electrocution, habitat loss and collision with the wind turbines. In 1980 they were categorised as threatened and endangered. Between 1992 to 2007 the species declined with about 60% to 70% only in SOUTH AFRICA. In some areas the population kept on dropping due to factors such as loss of foraging habitats due to expansion of the human population and activities such as deforestation, they also faced problems such as poisoning both intentional and unintentional by the farmers who intend to poison carcasses to kill the scavengers and the vultures feed on that carcass or they ingest livestock treated with veterinary medicines, drugs for example diclofenac. Illegal trade was the major threat to vultures' population, some used their parts for traditional medicines and cultural practices leading to poaching and unsustainable harvesting. They were even get killed by farmers who believed they preyed on live animals, they even called them the lamb slaughterers.



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